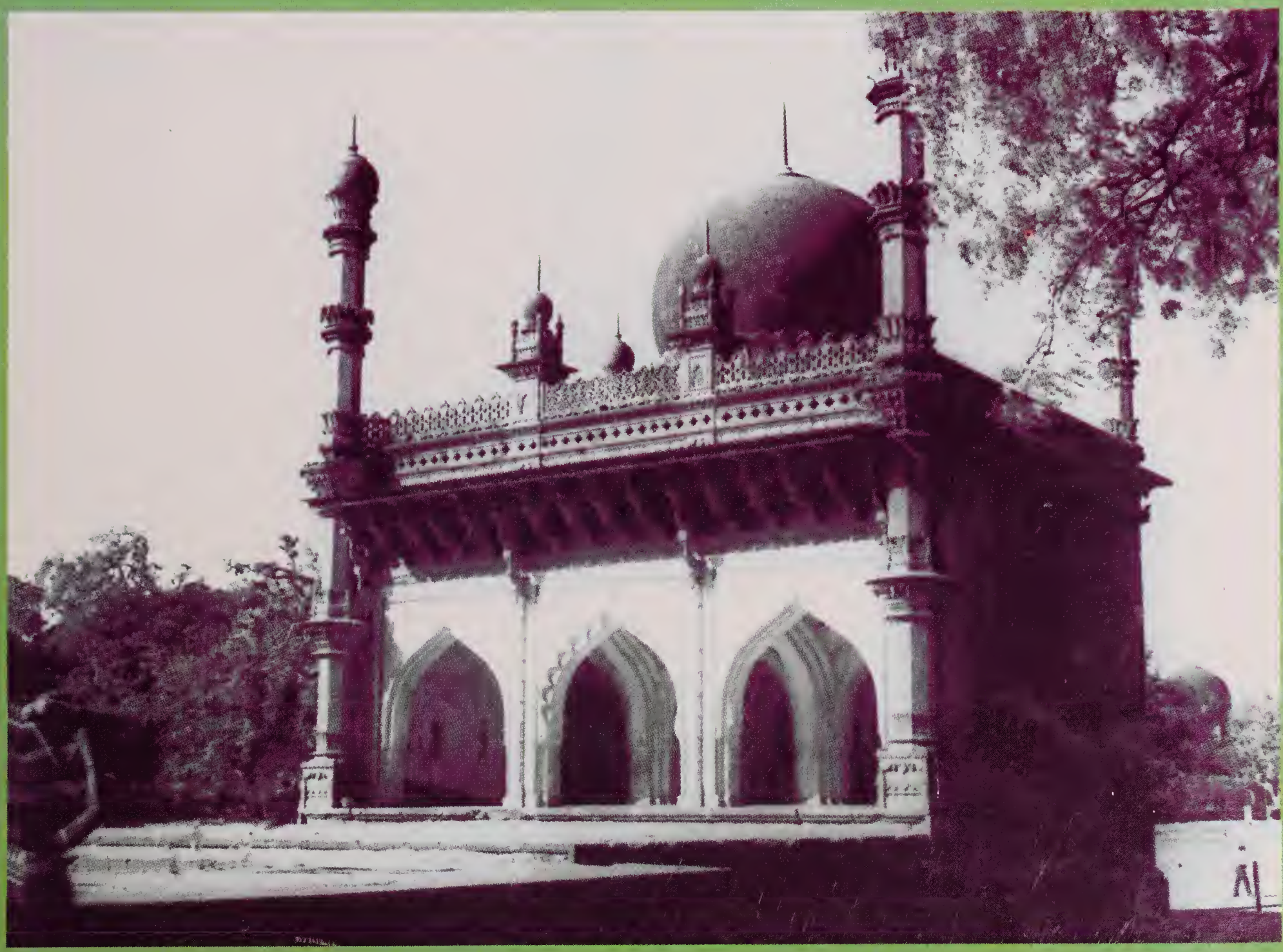
MOSQUES OF INDIA

ZIYAUD- DIN DESAI



PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Public.Resource.Org

https://archive.org/details/mosquesofindia00desa

MOSQUES OF INDIA

MOSQUES OF INDIA

by
DR. ZIYAUD-DIN A. DESAI, M.A, D.LITT
Ex-Director (Epigraphy)
Archaeological Survey of India

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

First Edition – March, 1966 *(Chaitra1888)*
Reprints– 1969, 1979, 1990.
Fifth Edition - 2003(Saka 1924)

© Publications Division

ISBN: 81-230-1001-X

Price : Rs. 48.00

Published by the Director, Publications Division,
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India,
Patiala House, New Delhi- 110001.

Sales Emporia • Publications Division

- Patiala House, Tilak Marg, New Delhi - 110 001
- Super Bazar, Connaught Circus, New Delhi - 110 001
- Ist Floor, Soochna Bhawan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003
- Commerce House, Currimbhoy Road, Ballard Pier, Mumbai - 400 038
- 8, Esplanade East, Kolkata - 700 069
- Rajaji Bhawan, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600 090
- Press Road, Thiruvananthapuram- 695 001
- Block No.4, 1st Floor, Gruhakalpa Complex, M.J. Road, Hyderabad-500 001
- 1st Floor, F Wing, Kendriya Sadan, Koramangala, Bangalore-560 034
- Bihar State Co-operative Bank Building, Ashoka Rajpath, Patna-800 004
- 27/6 Ram Mohan Roy Marg, Lucknow- 226 001
- Ambica Complex, 1st Floor, Above UCO Bank, Paldi, Ahmedabad-380 007
- Naujan Road, Ujan Bazar, Guwahati-781 001

Sales Counters : Press Information Bureau

- C/o PIB, C.G.O. Complex, 'A' Wing, A.B. Road, Indore (M.P.)
- C/oPIB, 80, Malviya Nagar, Bhopal- 462 003 (M.P.)
- C/o PIB, B-7/B, Bhawani Singh Road, Jaipur - 302 001

Printed at : Aravali Printers & Publishers (P) Ltd., W-30, Okhla Indl. Area, Phase-II, New Delhi - 20

CONTENTS

1. The Mosque in Islamic Society 1

2. Origin And Development 5

(i) The ritual of prayer 5
(ii) Essential parts and their functions 6
(iii) Conceptions and development 7

3. Architecture of Mosques in India 10

(i) Early Mosque architecture 12
(ii) Mosque architecture under the Delhi Sultans and Mughals 13
(iii) Mosque architecture under the provincial dynasties 16

Bengal (13-16th centuries) 17
Jaunpur (14-15th centuries) 17
Gujarat (14-16th centuries) 17
Malwa (15-16th centuries) 18
Deccan (14-17th centuries) 18
Kashmir (15-17th centuries) 19

4. Outstanding Mosques of India 20

5. Epilogue 40

THE MOSQUE IN ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Islam is an exceedingly simple religion and has the minimum of doctrine and ritual. Its central theme is the Unity of God, and its most important and, to a great extent, its only main ritual is the prayer performed five times a day. The importance of prayer may be judged from the fact that it was ordained to be, after the Creed or *Kalima* — belief in the Unity of God and the apostleship of Prophet Muhammad — the second of the five pillars of the Faith, *i.e.*, the fundamental tenets of Islam. The remaining three are Fast, Alms and Pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca.

Through its simple doctrine of absolute monotheism, Islam enjoined upon its followers a vivid realisation of God's all-pervading presence and might. It was necessary that a Muslim's religious consciousness should be identified with an intense feeling of absolute submission to the Almighty and the entire dependence on His grace. The consciousness of unbending resignation found expression in its main ritual— the daily prayers — and was naturally well reflected in its sanctuary. Thus, the mosque, or the prayer-house of Islam, became a symbol of sublimity and purity and, above all, of one-pointed devotion.

The mosque is supposed to provide ultimate fulfilment of these feelings. The Arabic term *Masjid* literally means 'a place where one prostrates oneself ' (before God), or, in other words, completely surrenders to God. This would mean that, strictly speaking, a sanctuary was not considered a fundamental necessity, since all places are equal for God and complete resignation and humility unto Him could be shown anywhere.

Prayer in Islam was, however, not intended to be a mere ritual; it was something more. It represented a whole way of life. That is why the mosque of the Prophet at Madina also became the place where the Muslims' community life manifested itself in all its nobler aspects. All the important activities affecting their daily life, unless they ran contrary to the basic tenets of Islam, took place in one or the other part of the mosque. Here they assembled for prayer behind the Prophet; here the Prophet delivered his addresses and

sermons which contained not only appeals for submission to God, but also regulations affecting the social life of his followers; here he used to sit and talk to people who came to him; here the delegates from other parts of Arabia calling upon him stayed; here prisoners were kept; and here were important matters discussed, cases heard and justice administered. Thus, in the very early days of Islam, the mosque was the centre of the political religious and social life of its followers.

It was from this early mosque at Madina that the general character of the Muslim mosque was determined. The early mosques that were established in the newly conquered territories were, likewise, centres of administration and daily worship of the Muslims, subject to modifications dictated by local conditions. Very soon, however, within the first century of the advent of Islam, the mosque tended to become more of a sanctuary. But though it became sacred, it could not completely cast off its old character and it still continued to be visited for purposes other than that of worship. Almost throughout the history of Islam, as we know from literary sources, this character of the mosque as a place of divine service and public assembly has more or less remained unchanged.

This phenomenon, it must be realised, was to a great extent due to the true character of the prayer which required adherence to the community. The prayer could be performed anywhere, but it was better if offered in a mosque. A prayer offered in a congregation was considered to be far more meritorious than the one offered in private. It is this stress on the community spirit in Islam, ultimately aiming at the cultivation of greater human values in the individual character, that lies at the root of the Islamic prayer. The mosque thus became, in fact, a meeting place of the people of the locality or the village. Here, at the appointed five times in the course of the day — dawn, meridian, afternoon, sunset and night — they would form a congregation and offer worship, led by a person called Imam, who would not only be better qualified than the rest in learning and wisdom, but would also be known to lead a life of piety and righteousness. At the second call to prayers *(takbir),* all the worshippers, whatever their status in life, would stand shoulder to shoulder in a straight line behind the Imam in one or more rows, and would implicitly obey him as one man in all his actions throughout the prayer. This absolute obedience to the Imam is the most imperative part of the prayer and the slightest breach of it — being a little out of line in the congregation, for example — would expose the defaulter to a charge of inexcusable negligence. This stern and strictly enforced procedure was expected to inculcate in the community a spirit of disciplined behaviour and a high sense of responsibility.

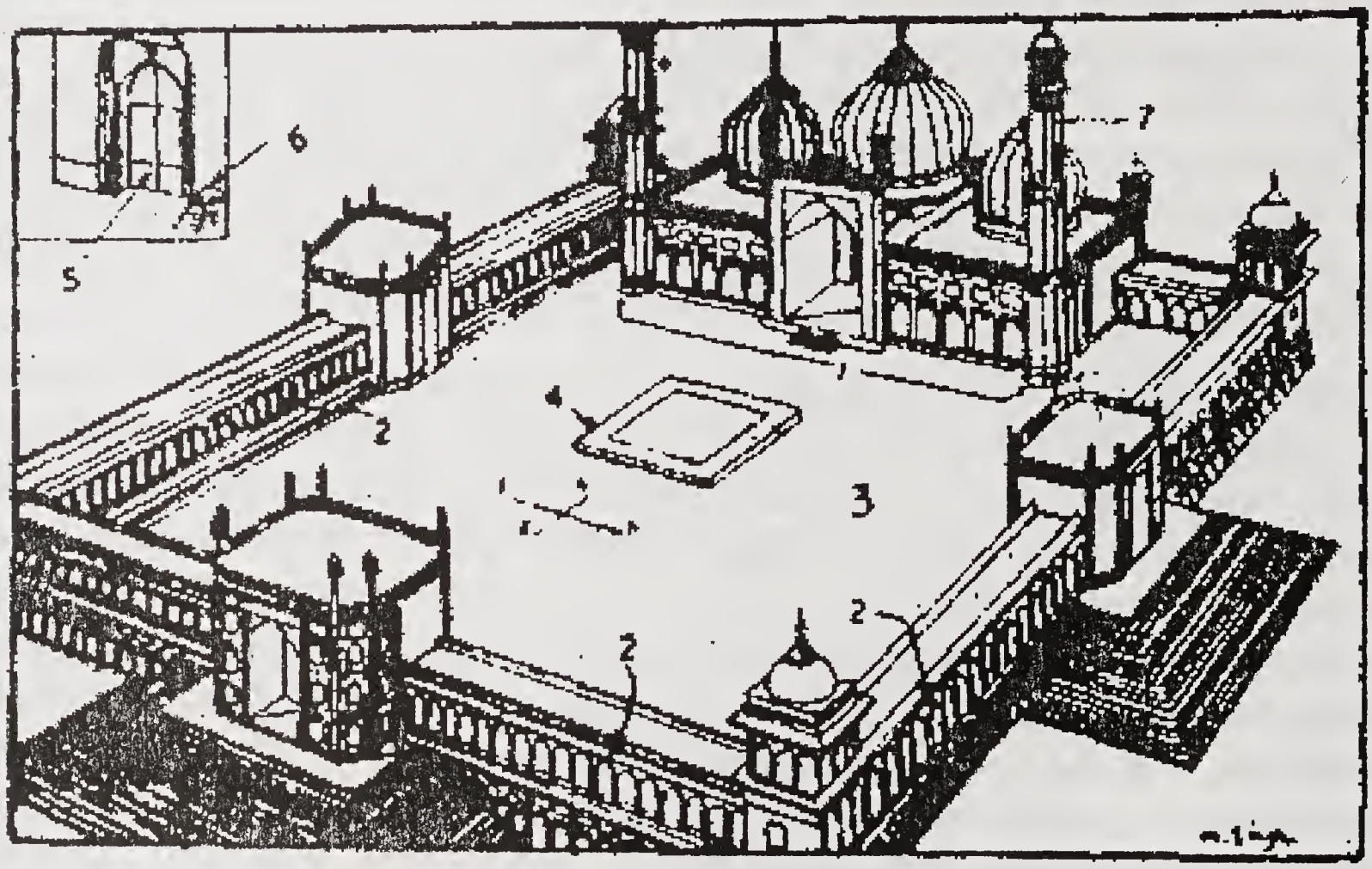
Apart from the merit of the divine service, the prayer thus offered in congregation played an important role in the cultivation of the spirit of community life. Such a gathering of the residents of a locality or village five times a day would afford ample, and the best, opportunity for the discussion of the day-to-day affairs of the community. Problems relating to an individual or the community as a whole would come up for review at the gathering. The mosque could thus become a permanent venue for the village council where, on the one hand, religious obligations were discharged in perfect unison and harmony and, on the other, different problems affecting the life and interests of the community came up for consideration and necessary action. That is why even after the centre of a political activities, subsequent to their rapid expansion in the following years, shifted from the mosque, it still continued to be the nucleus of the religious and social activities of the community.

The designation of the mosque as the "House of God" and its exclusive function as a place for the worship of God only was laid down in the Quranic verse: "And verily, the mosques are for God only; hence invoke not anyone-else with God therein" *(Quran,* Chapter LXXII, verse 18). It removed, as it was intended to do, all the barriers of caste, creed, country and race. There could be no distinction in the prayer-hall between high and low, great and small, old and young, white and black. The prayer and the prayer-house have provided a framework that has proved capable of binding people of diverse races and cultures into a single brotherhood. It is the mosque in which the Islamic concepts of equality and brotherhood have found true and complete demonstration.

In addition, the mosque has always played an important role in the educational life of the Muslims. By their very nature, the new studies stimulated by Islam were associated with the mosque. Learning of the *Quran* by heart and its detailed and comprehensive study formed the starting-point of Islamic learning, and the study of the Traditions of the Prophet came next. In principle, therefore, there was not much of a difference between a *madrasa* (educational institution) and a mosque. The latter served as a school, the teacher taking his place often beside a pillar with the pupils seated in front in a row or semi-circle. It was not unusual for a teacher to live in the mosque itself where a separate room was allotted to him. Likewise, lodging was provided to students, particularly in the colonnade or cloisters *(riwaq)* of the mosque. Even after the introduction of regular *madrasas,* a mosque remained a place of instruction as before. In India, too, as in other Islamic countries, education was given in mosques.

Throughout the centuries following the advent of Islam, this multi-purpose character of the mosque was more or less retained. The mosque combined in itself the functions of a prayer-house, a council and a school, and sometimes of a hostel, too.

Plan showing the essential parts of a typical congregational mosque the world over.



1. LIWAN (PRAYER-HALL)
2. RIWAQ (CLOISTERS)
3. SAHN (COURTYARD)
4. HAUD (TANK)
5. MIHRAB (PRAYER NICHE)
6. MIMBAR (PULPIT)
7. MINAR (MINARET)

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Before proceeding with the description of the general plan and essential parts of a mosque, with a brief outline, of their functions and its architectural development it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with the conventional form and mode of Islamic prayer.

THE RITUAL OF PRAYER

Prayer *(salat* in Arabic, *namaz* in Persian, Urdu and Hindi) is a devotional service whose performance is obligatory for every Muslim of age, at least five times a day, namely, dawn, meridian, afternoon, evening and night. These prayers, to be said in Arabic, are always preceded by the ablution of the face, hands and feet, whether they are offered individually or in a congregation. As already stated, offering of prayers in assembly is enjoined and considered far more meritorious. The time of the prayer to be offered in the mosque is, therefore, announced by a call to prayers *(azan)* given by a caller *(muazzin)* from an elevated part or adjunct of the mosque, which is usually, but not always, represented by a minaret. In response to this first call, the devout enter the mosque, perform the ablution and get ready for offering the prayers at the second call in the appointed manner and led by an Imam.

In addition to the five daily prayers, there are the Friday (*juma)* and the Id prayers. The former, a substitute for the meridian prayer, is offered every Friday. The latter, being additional prayers, are held twice in a year. These additional prayers are offered in large congregations representing the whole Muslim population of a village or town. The main feature is that a preacher *(khatib),* who is usually though not necessarily the Imam, delivers an address to the congregation from a pulpit *(mimbar),* raised by the side of the prayer-niche *(mihrab)* which is an arched recess set up into the western wall of the sanctuary.

This last part of the mosque represents a very important and indispensable feature of Muslim prayer in that it indicates the direction *(qibla)* in which all Muslims must turn their faces while praying, wherever they may be. This

distinction of being the *qibla* — the Spiritual Centre of the Muslim community — symbolising a goal leading to the greatest good as well as unity of purpose was conferred on the Kaaba in Mecca, to which the Muslims all over the world turn at the time of their daily and additional prayers. It has to be assured that, in a mosque, *the mihrab* must correctly point to the direction of Mecca.

This naturally implies a different orientation of mosques at different places all over the world. When one is away from a mosque, sometimes even a compass may be used to show the direction of the *qibla.* Such is, in brief, the ritual parts of the Muslim prayer.

ESSENTIAL PARTS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

For the warm climate of the West Asian countries, where Islam gained its first permanent foothold within decades of its advent, the most natural form of the prayer-house could only be a vast, open quadrangle *(sahn),* enclosed on three sides by covered cloisters or arched cells *(riwaq),* with either columns or arches connecting them, and on the *qibla* side (in India, on the West) by a large and deeper pillared hall *(liwan).* It is in the middle of the back wall of this hall that an arched, concave recess*(mihrab)* is set to indicate the direction of Mecca towards which one has to turn his face while offering prayers. The Imam, as the leader of the prayers, stands just within his niche. To its right stands the pulpit *(mimbar),* which is generally believed to have been introduced exclusively for the purpose of delivering the sermon *(khutba).* On it the Imam stands while delivering his address as an integral part of the weekly Friday or the two Id prayers. Later on, a minaret was also added to the mosque, either as a part of the building or independently nearby, since the call to prayers given from the top of it could be heard to greater advantage from an elevation higher than the surrounding buildings. According to some authorities the minaret was borrowed from the Syrian Church initially in a purely architectural way, but it was soon pressed into service for the *azan* call — a most natural thing to do. Then, there is a large tank or a fountain in the centre of the courtyard for ablution (wuzu), before saying the appointed prayers.

These are the essential parts comprising the mosque structure, particularly of a congregational one (masjid-i-jami). This plan was in vogue with some modifications here and there throughout the Islamic countries. But it took quite some time for this mosque plan to materialise through a perfect blending of its various component parts into a well-balanced homogeneous unit. As a matter of fact, "from the humble beginnings at Madina, through developments at Kufa, at Fustat and at Jerusalem, up to the completed form of the congregational mosque built at Damascus ninety years later, it took about three

generations to evolve a unified and balanced architectural expression of needs."

CONCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

In the beginning, the mosque structure was quite simple. It consisted only of a courtyard encircled by a wall. It was in fact, modelled after the Prophet's house in Madina, which consisted of a courtyard surrounded by a brick-wall, with living rooms and out-houses. In this courtyard were set palm trunks covered by a flat roof of palm leaves plastered with clay. This was the place where the early Muslims used to assemble for their daily prayers. In this plan lies the origin of the open quadrangular court, which became an integral part of the fully developed mosque complex of the later days. For some time to come, this courtyard of a typical Arabian house, arranged as such, continued to form the plan of a mosque. Almost similar was the first mosque of Islam, built by Prophet Muhammad himself, at Quba, about five kilometres from Madina. It had neither a dome, prayer-niche or minaret, nor were there any arches supported on pillars or cloisters.

This basic character of the early mosque does not seem to have changed under the early Caliphs, though there is evidence to show that under them an attempt was made to adopt a more advanced architectural form for it. For example, Caliph Umar is credited with having ordered alterations in the original mosques at Mecca and Madina. Also under his orders, the mosque at Kufa was extended by Sa'd through a Persian architect, and bricks and pillars were used in the new structure. The extensions made by Umar's successor Uthman to the Mecca and Madina mosques were likewise marked by the use of hewn stones and plaster for the walls and pillars and teakwood for the roof. But, despite these advancements on the early model, which related mainly to the replacement of the simple booth on the *qibla* side by a pillared hall and the use of finer material, the original mosque plan was still retained.

It was, however, under the Umayyid Caliph Al-Walid I (705-715) that the Madina mosque, and through it mosques at other places, underwent the first substantial change in plan. Walid considerably enlarged the Madina mosque, transforming it into a pillared hall, built of better material, with the assistance of artisans from neighbouring countries where the building art was already well advanced. Thus emerged, almost imperceptibly, the plan with the open courtyard enclosed by pillared halls on all sides, which is typical of a Muslim mosque. About this time, a fountain was also provided in the centre of the quadrangle. Likewise, the minaret, too, appeared during this period either as an integral part or as an adjunct of the mosque. The minarets became more and

The Khirki Mosque in Khirki locality, Delhi. Built by Khan-i-Jahan, it shows a departure from the normal plan of an open courtyard, which is divided here into four small courts.

more numerous only after some time. It would appear that the *mihrab,* now the most essential part in a mosque, was not a constituent of the original plan. The time of its introduction is not easy to determine but latest researches put it at the beginning of the eighth century; the pulpit *(mimbar),* however, was there right from the days of the Prophet.

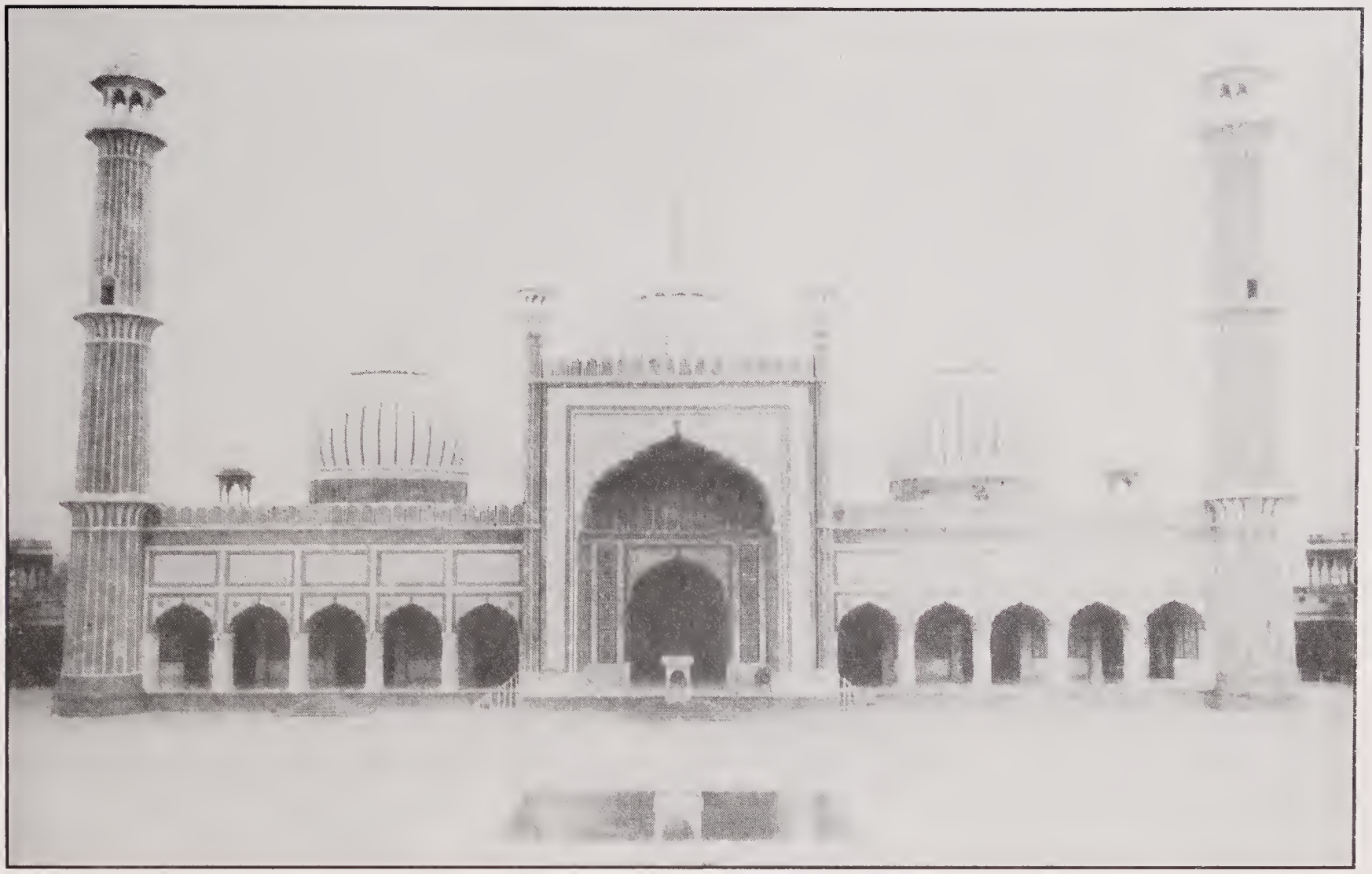
Anyway, the plan generally adopted in the Umayyid period in the different parts of the then Islamic world has survived through the centuries with some modifications necessitated by physical and like conditions or social and political circumstances prevailing at different periods in different regions like Egypt, Iran, Syria, Turkey, etc. There was, however, one main change in the plan in some cases, which related particularly to ordinary and not congregational mosques. These would only consist of a main sanctuary or prayer-hall *(liwan)* and a small court in front, bounded by a dwarf wall, containing the fountain or well, a place for ablution, etc. The majority of the mosque in the villages are of this type. The quadrangle and the cloister or arched cells *(riwaq)* on three sides were dispensed with in this new plan.

Among the important mosques of the different lands of Islam are the Holy Sanctuary at Mecca, the Mosque of the Prophet at Madina, the Mosque of Umar or Qubbatus-Sakhra at Jerusalem, the Grand Mosque at Damascus, the mosques of Amr, Ibn Tulun, Al-Azhar and Sultan Hasan at Cairo, the Great Mosque at Cordova and at Granada in Spain, the mosques at Constantinople and Konya in Turkey, and the mosques of Isfahan, Shiraz and Waramin in Iran, to name only a few.

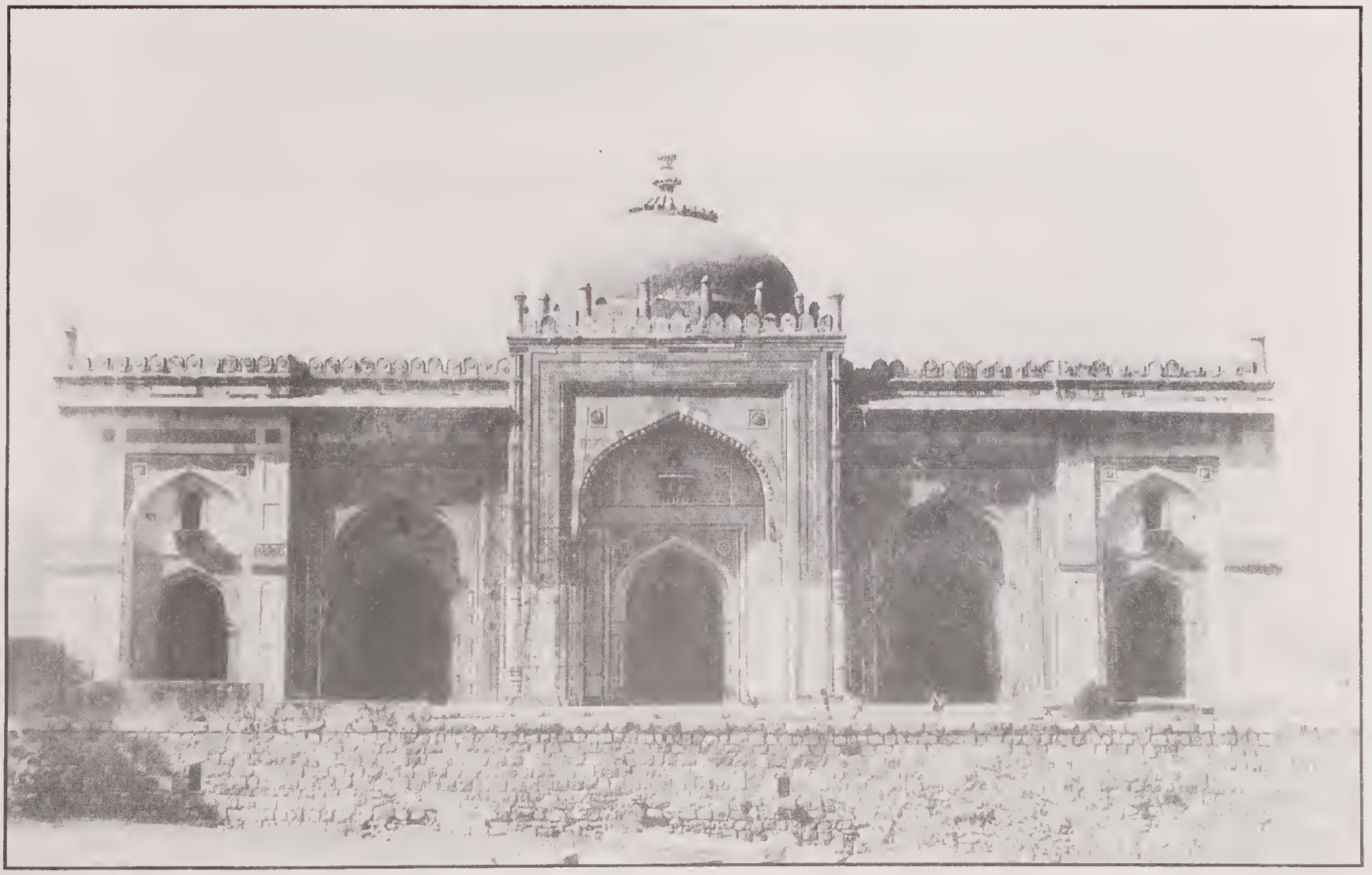
ARCHITECTURE OF MOSQUES IN INDIA

In the Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh sub-continent, excavations carried out since 1958 at Banbhore the generally accepted site of the historical city of Debal and later on at Mansura in the Sindh province of Pakistan, have uncovered the ruins of a Grand Mosque and a Jami Mosque respectively at these places. However, the exact character of their structures as they originally stood remain undetermined, the Archeological operations only indicating the size and the ground-plan of the Banbhore mosque, the earliest discovered so far. They furnish no clue to the elevation or designing of the building. Only a couple of the thirteen Kufi inscriptions reportedly found near the site, have been deciphered and these date the Banbhore mosque to the 8th – 10th century A.D. A third oldest mosque assigned to the Ghaznavid period has been more recently (1985 to 1986) discovered by an Italian Archeological Mission at Raja Gira in the Swat region of the North-West Frontier Provinces of that country. It is stated to have been constructed, according to an unillustrated published text of its epigraph, in 440 A.H. or 1048-49 A.D. However, the "long cursive Naskh script" of the inscription (whatever it may mean), not a very clear picture of the Kaba-pointing qibla wall, the conjectural Isometeric view of the building as it originally stood and not an elicit discription of the new find in a recently published article in **Historicus**, Journal of Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, January- March 2001,pp.65-71 by two officials of the Pakistan Directorate General of Archeology, would not make one accept the dating without reservation.

The Banbhore mosque is reported to have been built roughly on a square plane with a comparatively well-preserved 3-4-feet-wide outer wall, of dressed stone blocks and has a fine brick-laid courtyard in the centre. It contained several cloisters and corridors, on three sides supported on a double row of pillars, while on the fourth that is on the west side, there was a spacious prayer-hall with a roof supported on thirty-three pillars arranged in three rows. Some of the *in situ* stone bases of these pillars show carved ornamentation work. Other interesting features of the mosque are stated to include a lime-plastered (sic) ablution platform and a large rain-drain near it, two entrances on the



The grand Jami Masjid in the old city of Delhi. Ranked among the largest and most eminent buildings of the class, it was built by Emperor Shah Jahan during 1650-56. Imposing flights of steps lead to majestic gate-ways on three sides



Part of the facade of Qala-i-Kuhna Mosque in the Purana Qila, Delhi. It was built in 1541 by Sher Shah and represents the refined and imposing form of the Lodi style of mosque architecture

The Atala Masjid in Jaunpur was begun earlier, but completed only in 1408 during the reign of Ibrahim Sharqi. It is the earliest and finest specimen of the Sharqi architecture

eastern and northern sides and a minor entrance on the western side connected with a small flight of stairs. There are traces, the report further states, of wooden door-frames in the doorways as well as the prayer-hall. No *mihrab* (prayer-niche) was found in the western wall.

In India too, literary and epigraphical sources speak of construction of mosques at places like Broach,-Khambhat (Cambay), Somnath-Veraval, etc., in Gujarat in the 8^{th} – 12^{th} centuries. For example an Iranian business-magnate Firuz the Ship- Owner had constructed with the permission of the Somnath Temple authorities and local Panchayat office- bearers a Jami mosque there and made a fairly large endowment for its upkeep according to its surviving Arabic and Sanskrit inscriptions. Likewise, a Jami mosque with "Golden domes"was reconstructed by another Iranian merchant at Khambhat in 1218 A.D.,on the site of a mosque destroyed during the attack of the Malwa king, which was built in Circa 1135 A. D. by the celebrated king of Gujarat Siddhraj Jaisinh on the site of the old Jami mosque brought down by the local non-Muslim Jaina community in a communal flare up. None of these or other mosques have survived the ravages of the time; the early 13^{th} century Khambhat mosque was seen and described by the celebrated Persian Tadhkira writer and author of the *Jawamiul-Hikayat,* Muhammad Awfi, who had visited the place about the same time and the inscription recording the name of the Iranian builder and the date of construction can still be seen there. Likewise, at Bhadreshwar in Kachchh district of Gujarat also, remains of at least two mosques, dateable to the 12^{th}- 13^{th} centuries have been found. In short, the sub-continent has a fairly well-established tradition of mosque-construction since days prior to its having come under Islamic rule.

Unfortunately, no physical trace of any of these mosques has been found so far. Of the two mosques of the Pre-Muslim period at Bhadreshwar, a coastal town, which can be dated with a fairly good amount oficertainity to the 12^{th}-13^{th} century, the one known as Sola-Khambhi (16 pillared) mosque is half buried under the sand. It seems to have been constructed in the prevalent local architectural style, as is indicated by its building material constituting large blocks of stone, pillars square at base, octagonal in the middle and circular above, bracket capitals and lintels, about three meters in length, etc. The somewhat undisturbed portion of the building consists of two rows of columns in front of the prayer niche of the prayer-hall.

The other mosque at Bhadreshwar is situated to the north-east of the Sola-khambhi mosque. At present, its entry is through a door in the northern wall but the original entrance consisted of a covered *mandapa* like structure raised on pillars arranged in octagonal order, as in the then prevalent indigenous

architectural style. The western wall has a semicircular prayer-niche without any ornamentation or carving. Two simple but beautiful arched doorways give access to the prayer-hall, while the north and south walls have also two similar entrances each. In this mosque also, large slabs of stone have been used. The interior of the flat roof of the hall is carved with floral patterns and designs.In short, these earliest mosques of India, belonging to the Pre-Sultanate period of Delhi, are in the local beam and lintel style of local achitecture.

In India, the surviving well-preserved Muslim monuments date only from the last decide of the thirteenth century, when Muslim rule was firmly established over parts of northern India subsequent to the defeat of Prithviraj by Muhammad bin Sam, commonly known as Muhammad Ghori. By this time, it may be stressed, the Islamic building an had already achieved perfection in other Islamic countries, some of whose prominent specimens of mosque architecture have been enumerated earlier.

EARLY MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE

There is a recent trend, unsubstantiated but persistent, of speaking of mosque plans in terms of Hindu Vastu-shastra (Science of Architecture) and their structural members having derived from Buddhist architecture. As is well known, Islamic architecture has evolved from a synthesis of various styles of architecture prevalent in different regions of the Islamic world such as Byzantine, Iranian, Egyptian, Central Asian, etc. and there is no coded handbook laying down rules and norms for the plan, design or like requisites for the construction of a building as is the case with Vastu-shastra. Therefore, to call, for example, a square mosque as a "Chaturasra" one, a "Single-Qudruple" (whatever this may mean) an "Ekangana" one, three-arched mosque as 'Trimukhi' one,"Four-quartered" one as "Chaturangana", five-arched mosque as "Parichmukhi", etc., may appear plausible at first sight to a camel reader, but this type of nomenclature will be straightaway rejected by any serious student of Islamic architecture.

In India, too, as elsewhere, the first monuments to be associated with Muslims as builders were mosques, which was but natural. In the early stages, the builders faced serious problems in the matter of structural and architectural forms, building material and the system of ornamentation. It took some time before the Indian artisans on whom they had to depend could get completely used to the traditional Islamic style and design which they were required to adopt in the new buildings. Not that India was new to the art of construction. Far from that, it had a fully developed and exuberant style of its own. But the indigenous style was different, both in form and spirit as well as in method and

material of construction, from the style which the Muslims wanted, as of necessity, to be employed in their mosques. The conception of a spacious, open courtyard, enclosed by a long row of cloisters and large pillared or vaulted halls for a prayer-house, was not in vogue here. Again, the building material in India being mostly stone, the method of construction was conveniently trabeate, employing pillar and lintel. There was no need to use the structural forms of arch and vault, so necessary for spanning wide spaces and large areas, particularly in brick and lime-mortar constructions. Moreover, such architectural and structural forms as the dome, the minaret, the half-domed portal, the system of different types of pendentives for resting the circular dome on a lower square area and the like were essential parts of the new style. Its scheme of decoration, too, was confined to surfa!ce ornamentation in arabesque and floral patterns of multiple designs, inscriptions in different scripts, enamel tiles of varied colours, gilding, painting, inlay *pietra dura,* since sculpture of human forms or any other animate objects was discouraged by Islam.

It is this conflict between the two styles, foreign and local, that marks the first phase of Indo-Islamic architecture as a whole, of which mosque architecture as a whole, of which mosque architecture is an important part. It was gradually overcome, and the story of this process of removing the uncertainty of the earlier phase through a happy fusion of these two seemingly opposite systems into one homogeneous style, achieved with varying success in different parts of the country at different periods, is writ large on the mosques as well as other Muslim monuments, of India. Surviving almost a millennium of India's history, these mute and yet eloquent witnesses to the genius of the master-architects who conceived and executed such monumental relics of the past with all their spectacular majesty and dignified grandeur have become an integral part of the country's cultural heritage.

THE DELHI STYLES

This initial conflict is best visualised in the earliest mosques that were constructed in India; for example, the Quwwatul-Islam Mosque at Delhi and the arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra Mosque at Ajmer, both founded by Qutbud-Din Aibak —the first in about 1196 and the second in 1199, They vividly indicate how the various problems of construction subjected to Islamic ideas, design and method have not been successfully overcome. The arch and dome, for example, were built not in their true scientific method of voussoirs and edge-to-edge placings, respectively, but in the corbel style. Similarly, the structural expedient of covering a square building with a circular dome through one or

more phases of transition represented by squinch and intersection of arches was new to Indian artisans. The improvised and uncertain character of the Delhi and Ajmer mosques indicates an unsuccessful attempt at finding a satisfactory solution to these problems.

The result was that these earliest extant mosques, when completed, turned out to be almost Hindu buildings in character and design; even the purely structural features like dome and arch were treated according to the principles of the indigenous corbel style. The entity building of the Quwwatul-Islam Mosque, with its walls, capitals, architraves, ceilings, etc., wears an essentially Hindu look, which is further accentuated by its stone-material which came from the spoils of Hindu temples. The need was, therefore, felt for the addition, a couple of years later, of the huge, tall, arched screen of Islamic design thrown across the western enclosure to give to the mosque an Islamic appearance. The screen, though a monument of beauty in itself, was not a success architecturally, since it was disproportionately larger than the rest of the building. Structurally too, it did not succeed in its purpose, since its arches were not constructed in the true arch style. Even the lavish surface ornamentation was of local pattern. However, in the subsequent extensions to the mosque, carried out by Iltutmish (1211-36) in 1230 a slight change in the architectural style is noticeable, but structurally, in the matter of arch construction, the indigenous style was still dominant. The mosque at Ajmer founded in 1199 by Qutbud-Din Aibak aid subsequently expanded by Iltutmish in 1230, also possesses similar structural features, but it surpasses the Delhi mosque in the general effect produced by the perfect balance of its different parts. It also has better workmanship. There are some minor variations, represented by two small fluted minarets and an engrailed arch. By this time, it would seem, the Islamic form and pattern had slowly but steadily started to assert themselves.

The turn of the thirteenth century saw Islamic architecture in a different setting. The mosque architecture, too, underwent a complete transformation particularly on the structural side. The Islamic traditions of the building art were mastered in a remarkably short time, and a mature and fully developed style, both in the matter of building technique and ornament — represented in the Alai-Darwaza at Delhi — came into existence in the time of Alaud-Din Khalji (1296-1316). About this date or slightly later, we find a mosque built wholly in accordance with Islamic principles in which the arches and domes are built in the true style, the circular domes are placed on square chambers through the device of squinch-pendentives, and the shape of the arch and decoration too are in the Islamic style. This is the Jamaat-Khana Mosque attached to the Tomb of Hazrat Nizamud-Din Auliya at Delhi. Another impor-

tant aspect in which this mosque differs from the previous two mosques is that it comprises only a prayer-hall and does not have the traditional quadrangle with *riwaqs* on its three sides. This was probably because it was intended to serve only as a local mosque.

The following two centuries saw extensive architectural activity due to the consolidation and expansion of Muslim rule in different parts of the country. During the period, mosque architecture underwent change, except of course in the general plan. Under the Tughluqs (1320-1413), particularly in the time of Firuz Shah (1351-88), architectural style tended to be austere. In the building material as well as in the ornament, the mosques, like other monuments of the period, acquired overtones ot mass and heaviness. Nevertheless, the style had the quality of fine proportions and utility. In the course of the next 150 years, synchronising roughly with the rule of the Sayyid Lodi and Sur dynasties, (1414-44, 1451-1526, 1540-55), a vigorous attempt was made to achieve a certain amount of freedom of imagination and diversity in design and architecture. The culmination of these efforts came towards the latter part, particularly under the Surs, when the style acquired soberness and elegance, still further distinguished by lavishness of surface decoration.

These overtones in architectural style are vividly represented in the mosques of different period. A greater contrast is hardly imaginable than in the mosques of the Tughluq period, such as the Begampuri, Kalan, Khirki and Shah Alam mosques at Delhi. The mosques built in the outlying parts of Gujarat during this period, for example those at Broach, Cambay, Dholka and Mangrol, are, however exceptions.

The Delhi mosques are characterised by thick and bettering walls, sloping minaret-like buttresses and supports at the external angles, multi-domed roofs, arch-and-beam entrances and like architectural features, as well as by surface ornament of inscribed borders, medallions in arch spandrels, multi-coloured painting on plaster and encaustic tile-decoration of varied hues. Incidentally, it is owing to this ephemeral quality of their ornament that these mosques, now shorn of their original elegance of line and variety of colour, give the impression, in some cases at least, of uncouth masses of undressed stone. Some, like Khirki and Kalan mosques, suggest, by their stern and somewhat gloomy appearance, the idea of a medieval stronghold. The mosques of the Lodi and Sur periods, on the other hand, like the Bara-Gumbad, Moth and Qala-i-Kuhna mosques at Delhi, are generally distinguished by a balanced composition of their architectural parts, refined workmanship and better building material on one hand, and, on the other, by their ornate character achieved through profuse decoration and richness of colour.

An era of unprecedented architectural activities dawned with the foundation of the Mughal empire in India in 1526. But the new regime, under its first two rulers, Babur (1526-30) and Humayun (1530-40,1555-56), had practically no impact on the existing style. This was evidently owing to their short rule and preoccupation with political and military affairs. Of this period, no mosque of any outstanding architectural merit has been found. Even Akbar (1556-1605), a great builder that he was, does not stand out as an equally zealous mosque builder. The most interesting mosque of his time, the Jami Masjid at Fatehpur Sikri, while conforming to the conventional style, is characterised by greater foreign (mostly Persian) influence, in general appearance as well as in architectural design. This foreign influence had first appeared a few years earlier, almost all of a sudden, in Humayun's tomb at Delhi. As a matter of fact, the arcuate — arch-and-vault — style in this mosque is as predominant as the trabeate style is in other monuments of Akbar.

The next important change in mosque architecture came about in the reign of Shah Jahan (1627-58). The style became more refind, delicate and pretty, which was, to a large extent, owing to the change in building material from red sandstone to marble. Architecturally, the arch assumed a multi-foil or cusped shape, the supporting pillars having many-sided tapering shafts with foliated bases and voluted bracket capitals. The dome which had a constricted neck with its lower part also curving, acquired a bulbous shape- The scheme of ornament consisted of elaborate surface carving in low relief, lavish *pietra dura* work of artistic inlay of semiprecious and multi-coloured stones in marble or of black marble in white marble, and the like. Among the mosques representative of this style, the most outstanding is the Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque at Agra.

The general decline in architecture under Aurangzeb (1658-1707), and more so under his successors (1707-1858), also affected the style. On the whole, it is marked, towards the later period, by distinct degeneration of architectural forms and designs, deterioration in taste and lack of balance and proportion. The Pearl Mosque in the Red Fort, Delhi, may, however, be considered an exception, though the beginnings of the degenerate style are clearly discernible here too. A large number of mosques built in and around Delhi during the period 1707-1858 illustrate this degenerate form of the mosque architecture.

PROVINCIAL STYLES

The architectural activities were not confined only to the north, except in the very early years of Muslim rule. These gained greater impetus when, first during the Tughluq regime and then at its close, independent kingdom arose in

during the Tughluq regime and then at its close, independent kingdom arose in Bengal, Deccan and other parts of India — Jaunpur, Malwa, Gujarat etc. Under these kingdoms, a new and distinct architectural style was born as a result of the impact the architectural style of Delhi had on the local styles in these regions. Some of these, as in Gujarat, were of an exceptionally high order. These provincial versions of the Indo-Islamic architectural style also produced a number of impressive mosques which can compare favourably with the best specimens in any country.

In Bengal, the earliest extant mosque, namely, the Adina Mosque at Pandua in Malda district, built in 1369, is more like a stylised version of the imperial model. In the following century, mosque architecture acquired its typical style, which was partly influenced by physical conditions like local soil and climate, particularly its heavy rainfall. The mosque here, built mostly of brick, does not have an open quadrangle enclosed by *riwaqs* as in the orthodox plan, but is a compact building comprising the prayer-hall with a courtyard in front. This type persisted to the last though a few mosques at Dacca, now in Bangladesh were no doubt built on the orthodox plan during the Mughal period. It took the form of a square or rectangular chamber with octagonal turrets at angles and a curvilinear facade in the pre-Mughal mosques and a horizontal one in those built in the Mughal times; all its bays and aisles opened directly through doors, except those on the *qibla* side, for letting in fresh air, but the doors were deliberately kept low as a precautionary measure against heavy rainfall. The later mosques of Bengal are also remarkable for their rich terracotta decoration of great elegance in the close set shallow panels all over the walls; at times, it is at the cost of perfection and symmetry of the buildiags themselves.

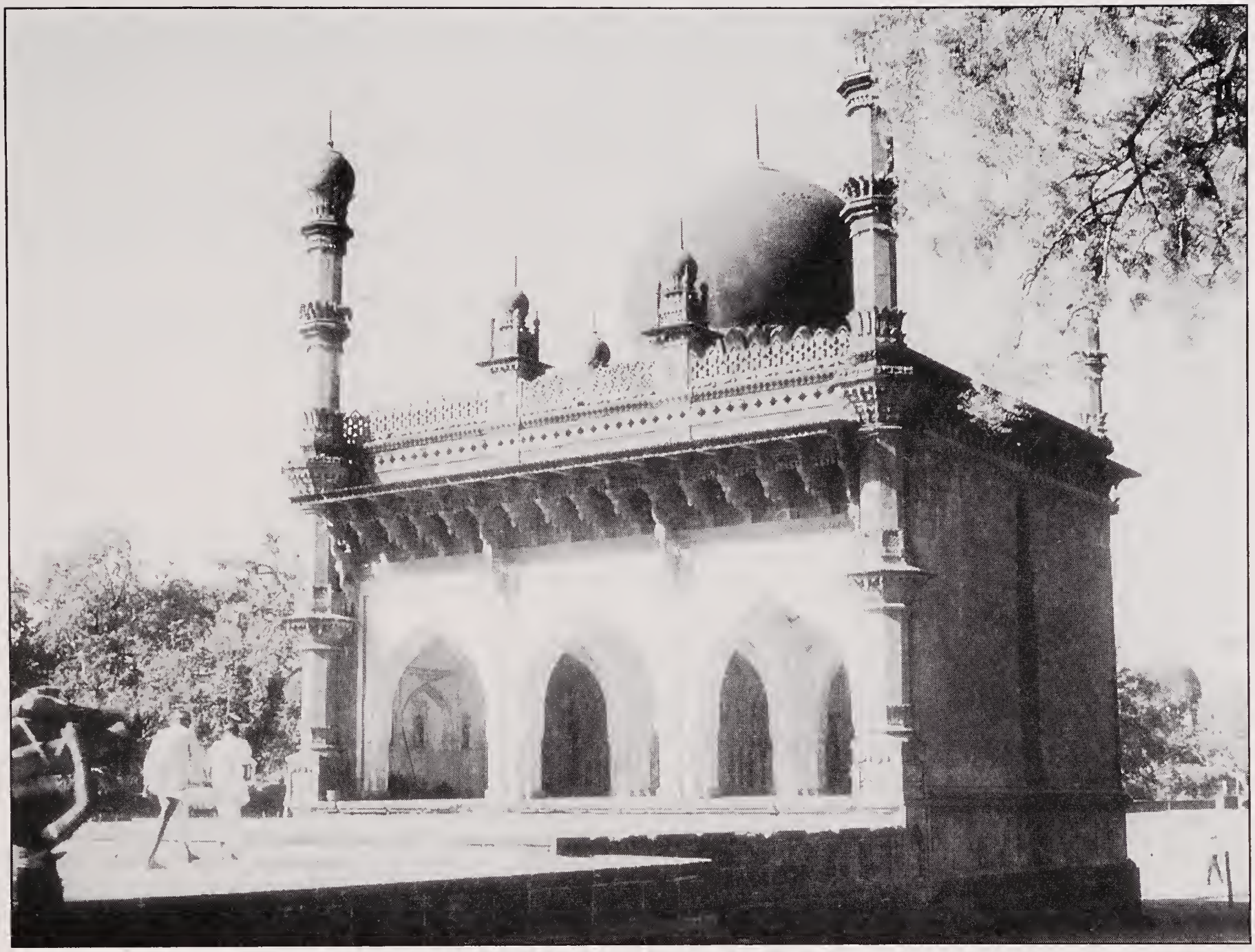
The bold and forcèful mosque architecture of Jaunpur.developed under its Sharqi rulers *(circa* 1360-1480), has its own distinctive character. Represented only in a few mosques built of stone, such as the Atala Masjid, the Lal Masjid and the Jami Masjid at Jaunpur, the style betrays strong influences of the later Tughluq mosques. The Jaunpur mosques conform to the orthodox plan and are built in arcuate-*cum*-trabeate system and have short square pillars with bracket capitals. Their most typical feature is the imposing propylon screen of huge dimensions in the facade, of which an early undeveloped form may be seen in the Begam-puri Mosque of Delhi. Lacking refined and delicate surface decoration, the Jaunpur mosques give an over-all impression of stern austerity.

Unlike in Bengal, the Gujarat mosques are constructed of stone and conform both to the orthodox and the single prayer-hall type. The latter was either closed from the front or open. Characterised by spaciousness, elegance, symmetry and proportion, the style here is more Indian both in the structural and

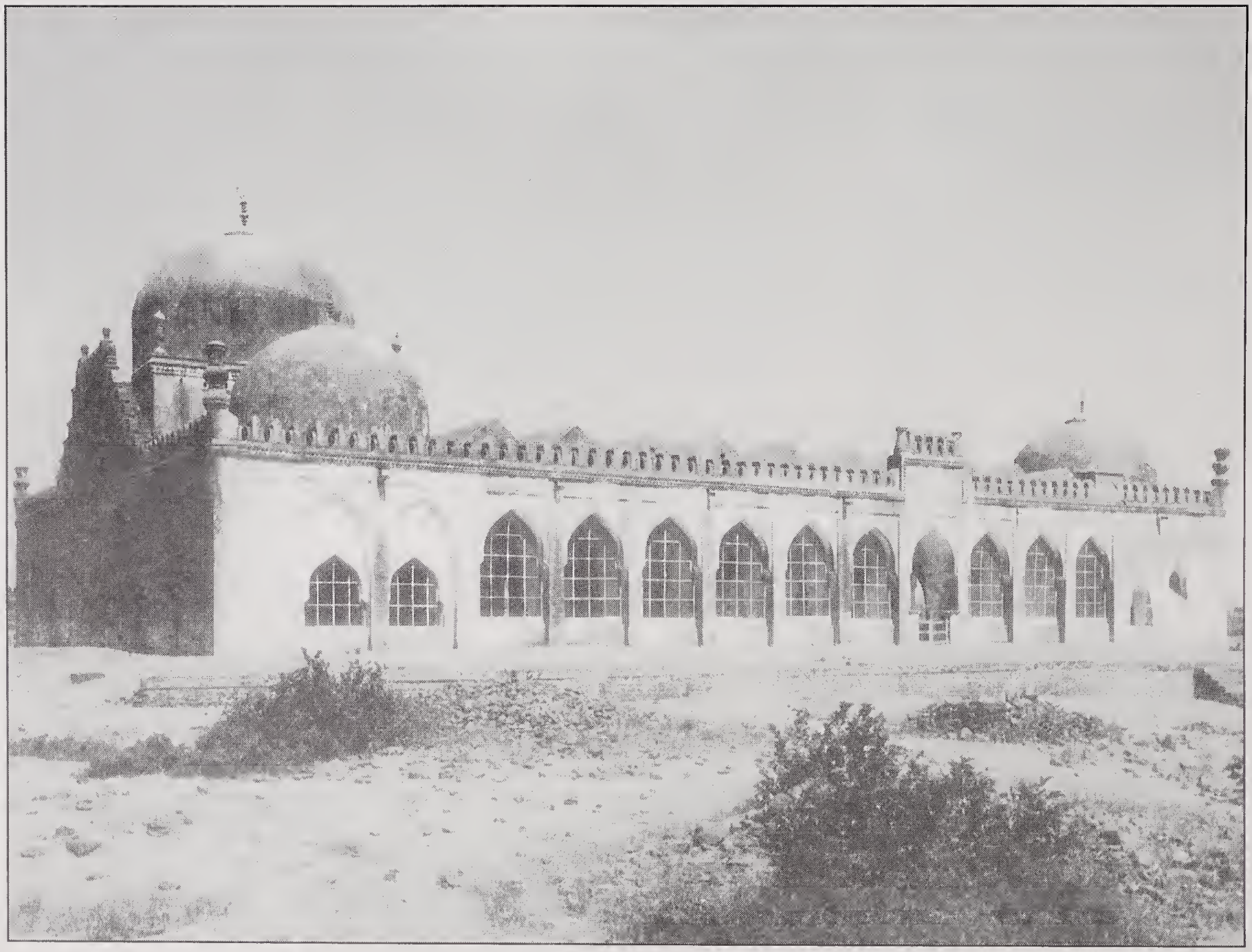
even where the arches and domes are used, they are mainly decorative in purpose. A special feature of a Gujarat mosque is the ingenious device of admitting light by raising a clerestory in the centre of the prayer-hall, with running galleries all round, the connecting panels being encased in perforated stone-screens. Among its other distinguishing features are tall and graceful minarets, which either flank the buttresses marking the central opening of the closed-hall mosque, or appear at the front comers in the open pillared-hall ones. The system of ornament in the Gujarat mosques consist exclusively of delicately carved stone surfaces and perforated screens, niches, mouldings and string-courses, frequent use of richly sculptured oriel windows on brackets in the side and front walls, etc. Towards the end of the Sultanate period *(Circa* 1570), it seems, the mosque architecture underwent some change, as is indicated by a greater use of the arcuate style found in the mosque of Sidi Said and of Sayyid Muhammad Ghaus at Ahmedabad.

The mosque style of Malwa is essentially arcuate, and many of its features in the early phase are derived, as in the case of the Jaunpur mosques, from the Tughluq prototypes. The earliest mosques in this style are the Kamal Maula Mosque and the Lat Mosque at Dhar and the mosque of Dilawar Khan at Mandu. In the mature phase, the buildings became more massive, sober and original in character. The mosque of Malik Mughis and Jami Masjid at Mandu represent this phase.

In Deccan, where the independent Bahmani dynasty was established as early as 1347, a distinct architectural style came into vogue. In the beginning it was influenced by the contemporary Tughluq style, but later on, it borrowed freely from the building art of Persia. It remained almost unaffected by the prevailing rich traditions of the local Hindu architecture. Curiously enough, the earliest mosque in the fort at Gulbarga, the first capital of the Bahmanis, is different rom any other of its type in India. The treatment of its facade, arcades, stilted dome, drum, etc., is indicative of strong Persian influence. Some of these features became permanent parts of Deccan mosques. The later mosques, like the Jami and Sola Khambha mosques at Bidar, are marked by greater Persian influence, particularly in the treatment of arches, domes and decoration. The Deccan style developed further regional tendencies after the break-up of the Bahmani kingdom into five principalities, of which Bijapur and Golconda witnessed architectural activities on a larger scale. The mosque of Bijapur illustrate a style that is mature in regard to methods of construction and conception, as well as in the field of ornament and decoration. Among other features of the Bijapur mosques are: a bulbous dome, almost spherical in shape and



Believed to have been constructed in 1587 by Ibrahim Adil Shah II, the Zanjiri Mosque at Bijapūr derives its name from the hanging chain-ornamentation on its facade. This small but neat structure is also known as Malika Jahan's Mosque, since it was built in honour of Princess Jahan Begum.



The Jami Masjid inside the Fort at Gulbarga was built in 1367 during the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani. One of the most interesting mosques in India, architecturally its distinctive feature is the covered arcaded hall in place of the open court.

springing from a band of conventional petals encircling its drum, tall and slender minarets and miniature ones at prominent parts and angles, boldly projecting cornice supported on richly carved brackets, etc. The Jami, the Ibrahim Rauza, the Zanjiri and the Andu mosques at Bijapur are only a few of the many mosques in this style. Very similar to the Bijapur style is that of the Golconda mosques, which are characterised by lavish surface decoration in cut-plaster and an unnecessarily large number of small turrets and cupolas, used merely for ornamental effect. Some of its motifs of surface decoration are derived from Hindu sources, but the architectural forms are more Persian in character. A few mosques at Golconda and the Jami, the Makka and the Toli mosques at Hyderabad are some of the important monuments of this class.

The most striking aspect of the mosque architecture of Kashmir is that its chief building material is timber. In plan, a Kashmir mosque is either a square building like the mosques of Madani and Shah Hamadan at Srinagar, or it consists of a group of square halls so disposed as to conform to the orthodox mosque plan, as in the case of Srinagar's Jami Mosque. The said square chamber is covered with a pyramidal roof, rising in tiers and crowned by a slender spire above. It has an open square pavilion between the spire and the apex of the roof, from where the call to prayer is given.

OUTSTANDING MOSQUES OF INDIA

In a vast country like India, where a large number of Muslims have been living for the past one millennium, it is not surprising to find a large number of mosques erected in different periods throughout its length and breadth. Most of these may no doubt be comparatively recent structure of little architectural merit or of no particular interest otherwise. But there are many mosques which are not only important architecturally, but are also extremely pleasing in appearance and have immense appeal for the discerning eye. It is impossible to attempt even a brief description of all such mosques in this short account. Therefore, only a few of the more important mosques are described below:

IMPERIAL DELHI: AJMER AND DELHI

Quwwatul-Islam Mosque, Delhi

This mosque, the earliest extant Muslim monument of India, is built in the orthodox plan of a vast court, about 43 m by 33 m, enclosed by colonnades of greystone, three bays deep on the east and two bays deep on the north and the South sides. On the west stands the prayer-hall, measuring about 45 m by 12 m and four bays deep. Fixed into the stone-pavement in front is the famous Iron Pillar.

This mosque was built during 1191-96 by Qutbud-Din Aibak, by the order of his master Muhammad bin Sam, and was further extended by Iltutmish in 1230, his additions extending 35 metres to the north and the south. Architecturally, the mosque is not a success. Materials from the spoils of Hindu buildings, beautiful in detail, have been simply put together around the court to form the orthodox plan of a mosque, with the result that the original building with its pillars, architraves, ceilings and flat domes, looked strikingly Hindu in character. Consequently, to impart an Islamic form to the building, an arched screen of Islamic design, covering the whole front of the prayer-hall, was put up. This screen, which is by far the most conspicuous part of the mosque, consists of a lofty central arch of ogee shape, about 6.5 m wide and 16 m high, with two lesser arches on each side. Simple in form and profusely carved

with religious texts and floral patterns, the screen is an impressive piece in itself, but it is too high as compared with the colonnades around. Structurally, too, the arches of the screen are constructed not in the true scientific style, but in the indigenous corbel method. Incidentally, this very fact is a proof of its early age. Outside this mosque, towards the south-east, stands the world famous Qutb Minar.

Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra, Ajmer

Resembling the above mosque in style and method of construction, but more spacious and dignified, this second earliest mosque, originally measuring about 80 m on each side, was also founded by Qutbud-Din Aibak in 1199. It clearly indicates an improvement on the earlier model : its colonnades are not overcrowded with pillars, nor are the pillars low; the tall and slender pillars in the prayer-hall and the domes above are symmetrically placed, resulting in a sanctuary of great beauty, measuring about 43 m by 12 m, whose effect is matched by an exquisitely carved *mihrab* of white marble in its western wall. Also, the seven-arch screen, added by Iltutmish in 1230, is remarkable for its admirable surface decoration and perfect workmanship. It is further distinguished by the variation in the treatment of its side-arches, which are engrailed, and of its larger central arch flanked by two small, fluted minarets. The balanced composition of these features imparts to the mosque an appearance of great elegance and dignity.

Jamaat-Khana Mosque, Delhi

This mosque, forming the western side of the enclosure of the tomb of Hazrat Nizamud-Din, occupies a total area of 29 m by 17 m, and was built of red sandstone in the reign of Alaud-Din Khalji (1296-1316). It does not conform to the usual orthodox plan of a mosque. It comprises only a rectangular prayer-hall with three shallow-domed chambers, each having as its entrance a broad archway surrounded by a wide band of beautifully carved inscriptions and having a fringe of spearhead motif attached to its intrados. The interior design of the central chamber, about 11.5 m square, with its squinch arches supporting the dome, is quite pleasing. In the side-chambers, which measure about 16 m by 6 m internally, these supports are replaced by triangular pendentives, which suggest a later date — Tughluq period — for this portion. But, as Sir John Marshall has pointed out, the whole building presents such a graceful and homogeneous unit that it is difficult to agree with it. So far as we know, this is the earliest mosque in India constructed wholly in accordance with the Islamic principles of the building art. According to tradition, the central chamber was originally built by Prince Khizr Khan, son of Alaud-Din

Khaiji, to serve, in due course, as a tomb of the saint, who at the time of his death, however, expressed his desire not to be buried there. Therefore, the building was later on converted into a mosque by the addition of two side chambers.

Kalan Masjid, Delhi

After the Jami Masjid, the most prominent structure in the old city is the Kalan Masjid. Situated within the Turkman Gate, it was built in 1387 by Junan Shah, entitled Khan-i-Jahan, the prime minister of Firuz Tughluq. Fortress-like in appearance, with rounded bastions at the four corners and a boldly projecting entrance reached by a flight of 30 steps, it looks all the more impressive on account of its being raised on a basement storey, about 8.5 m in height, consisting of a number of small double apartments. The upper storey, comprising the mosque proper, is in the orthodox mosque plan, with the prayer-hall on the west and cloisters on the remaining three sides of an open square eourt. The covered area is roofed by thirty domes. This mosque provides an interesting example of the architectural style of the Tughluq period as expressed through the rough masonry coated with heavy plaster, the slope of the bastions and the taper of the turrets.

Khirki Masjid, Delhi

This mosque, situated in the Khirki village, was also built by Khan-i-Jahan. It resembles the Kalan Masjid in its outward general appearance: both look almost alike from without. Considerably larger than the other, occupying an area of about 87 sq.m, it is also a double-storeyed building, a basement of vaulted cells forming its lower storey, the angles buttressed with sloping darned towers. Domed gateways, flanked by tapering minarets, boldly project from the main face of the mosque; the east one of these forms the main entrance, projecting about 7 m and the rest about 5.5 m. The whole roof is covered by 85 domes. But it is the unusual design of its interior, entirely different from that of the Kalan Masjid, which is of special interest architecturally. It is constructed, like the Kali Masjid near the tomb of Hazrat Nizamud-Din, on a cruciform or cross-like plan; its quadrangle, instead of being kept open with surrounding cloisters, is divided into four small courts by two additional rows of arcades, running east-west and north-south, which interset each other in the centre at a right angle. This departure from the general plan does not appear to have found favour.

Begampuri Masjid, Delhi

Known after the name of the Begampur village, where it is situated, its construction is also attributed to Khan-i-Jahan. This mosque is of considerable

dimensions, measuring externally about 94 m by 88 m. It is built in the usual courtyard-cum-cloisters plan, and consists of one storey only. The three sides, having cloisters, have domed gateways in the centre. The eastern gateway, projecting about 9 m outwards from the main wall, is reached by a flight of 15 steps. The gateways are covered by 44 domes. The prayer-hall on the west consists of a central chamber, square in plan and covered by a large dome, and on the sides are compartments, three bays deep, which are also roofed by domes, some of which have fallen. But, a quite prominent feature of the mosque is its main central arch of considerable height. Deeply recessed and enclosing three arched openings which lead into the chamber, it is flanked by sloping buttresses, each containing a spiral staircase leading to the roof. It is the treatment of this part that has set an important landmark in the architectural style, for it was this portion which was later on perfected into the huge and forceful propylons, the most striking feature of the Sharqi mosques at Jaunpur.

Bara-Gumbad Mosque, Delhi

Situated by the side of a square domed building called Bara-Gumbad to the south of its front court in the enclosure of the Lodi tombs, this mosque was built in 1494 by Mughla Buwa Makhduma-i-Jahan, widow of Sultan Buhlul Lodi (1451-89), and though of comparatively moderate size, can boast of some interesting architectural features. It consists of a single hall, measuring about 25 m by 6.5 m, which is divided into five bays; the three central bays are covered with hemispherical domes, while the side ones have low, flat vaults. The domes rest on corbelled pendentives of fine finish with elaborate carvings. Three oriel windows project, one each from the middle of the side and the back walls. The external corners and the projecting central portion of the west wall are provided with sloping buttresses of sufficient interest. Crowned by lotus cresting, the upper central portions of these turrets are alternately shaped into angular and circular flutes, reminiscent of the similarly fluted design of the Qutb Minar. Also striking is the treatment of the arched opening, whose arches of equal but unusual shape are too wide for their height. The size and form of the three domes is pleasing, but the manner of their placing has detracted from their impressiveness. The mosques is also remarkable for its elaborate cutplaster decoration of a refined order. According to some, the Bara-Gumbad, a monument of great beauty ,and grandeur in itself, was the main gateway of this mosque.

Moth-ki-Masjid, Delhi

The mosque, situated in the village of the same name, is reported to have been built by Miyan Bhuwa, prime minister of Sikandar Lodi (1489—1517).

Regarded as the epitome of all that is best in the architecture of the Lodi period, its success as an architectural monument of a higher order can be judged from the fact that the style initiated in this mosque finally found perfection in the Qala-i-Kuhna Mosque of Sher Shah.

The mosque stands on the west side of a raised platform fronted by arched cells and enclosed by a low wall. Entrance is through an ornamental gateway on the east, built of red sandstone inlaid with marble. At the front angles of the enclosure stand octagonal kiosks (chhatris), originally covered with blue tile decoration, of which ample traces remain even today. The mosque proper consists of a large rectangular hall, about 38 m by 8 m, having five finely shaped arched openings in its facade. The central arch is enclosed by a high and deeply recessed arch of red stone ornamented with marble, with a small window under its apex. The back corners have double-storeyed turrets with arched openings. Internally, the prayer-hall is divided into five compartments, of which the central one and those at the end are surmounted by three domes of pleasing volume, which are thus better spaced. The stalactite pendentive supporting the domes in the side compartments is a fine combination of structural and ornamental devices. The over-all effect produced by these pleasing features of the mosque is enhanced by the colour scheme of the building material of red sandstone and white marble, as also by the surface decoration of elegant arabesque painting on plaster and of coloured tile-work.

Jamali-Kamali Mosque, Delhi

The construction of this mosque was commenced in about 1528-29. It is situated in the Mehrauli area and stands in a court, bounded by a low wall, which is entered by a gateway on the south. The rectangular prayer-chamber is fronted by five arched openings of almost the same size, but they are rather wide for their height. The central opening is set in the usual projecting bay, within a recessed arch, and has a balconied window above. The parapet level is profusely ornamented with pendant lotus-buds, a feature freely adopted in Mughal buildings. On either side of the central arch is a fluted pilaster of red sandstone which presents a happy contrast to the marble carving and bands around the arch. The interior of the mosque is divided into five compartments. The side compartments have flat ceilings, while the central one is converted by elegant pendentives into an octagon from which springs the high dome. Three balconied windows project from the west wall and a similar one from the south wall. At each end at the rear is an octagonal turret, ornamented with tiers of arched recesses and two rows of arched openings. Architecturally, it marks the phase of transition from the style of the Moth-ki-Masjid to the famous Qala-i-Kuhna Mosque.

Qala-i-Kuhna Mosque, Delhi

This mosque is one of the few extant monuments in the Old Fort or Purana Qila. Built by Sher Shah in 1541, it represents the fully developed and most imposing form of the Lodi styte characterising the Moth-ki-Masjid and Jamali-Kamali Masjid. Its plan consists of a rectangular prayer-hall, about 51 m by 15 m, pierced by five arched entrances, the central one being higher than the rest. Each of these archways is placed within a large recessed archway, which in its turn is set within a rectangular frame, flanked by narrow fluted pilasters. The recessed surface is beautifully decorated with inlay of marble and other stones and has a small oriel window under its apex. The treatment of the two arches on either side is similar, but they are comparatively plain. At the rear angles are octagonal double-storeyed turrets, with arched opening in each face and galleries on brackets marking the floor levels of each storey. From the side as well as the back walls project balconied windows, whose brackets are of the same type as those used later in the Agra fort. The roof is covered by a single dome of pleasing shape. The interior is divided into five bays. The mihrabs in the west wall corresponding to the outer openings are richly decorated with black and white marble in diverse geometrical patterns. Also impressive is the manner in which the vaulted roof or the internal domes are supported on the three distinct systems of pendentives, namely, squinch, stalactite and cross-rib. In short, a perfect balance of its different parts and a richer and greatly refined decoration of white marble and colour inlay in varied arabesque patterns have rightly earned for this mosque the distinction of being the last and greatest pre-Mughal mosque of Delhi and one of the best in the country.

BENGAL : GAUR AND PANDUA

Adina Masjid, Pandua (District Malda)

By far the most important mosque of the earlier days in Bengal, the Adina Masjid was built in 1369 by Sultan Sikandar Shah (1357-93). It is one of the largest mosques in India, its outer dimensions being approximately 155 m by 87 m and is built according to the orthodox plan, with a large courtyard enclosed on all sides by cloisters, formed by 260 pillars and 88 archways, each leading into five bays on the western side and three on the other sides. The whole building is covered by 378 identical small domes, one over each bay. These domes rest on pendentives of overlapping brick courses in which bricks are set diagonally in every third course. All the archways facing the court are similar in design except the one in the centre of the prayer-hall on the west, which is higher and wider than the rest. Behind this latter, the nave was originally covered by an elongated barrel-shaped vault, now partly fallen.

Again, there is not a single entrance gateway worthy of a structure of this magnitude; three insignificant bays at the south-eastern corner were left open to serve the purpose of an entrance. It is these factors which impart to the whole building a monotonous character, which is slightly relieved by a variation in the interior brought about in the form of a two-storèyed section in the building popularly called Badshah-ka-Takht (Royal Seat), evidently reserved for the royal family. In the lower storey, the square pillars are heavy and short with massive bracket capitals typical of Bengal. The pillars in the upper storey are elegant and of the usual proportions, with fluted shafts and expanding capitals. Incidentally, the Adina Mosque is the only great mosque in Bengal constructed on the orthodox plan.

Chamkatti Mosque, Gaur

This mosque is among the early ones built in the typical Bengal style. It was built towards the close of the 15th century, or, if the inscription appearing thereon is *in situ,* in 1575. It consists of a single square brick chamber with stone-facing in the interior, measuring about 7 m each side. The chamber is butted on the east with a large vaulted verandah, about 3 m broad. Each angle of the building has an octagonal tower, while its roof is curvilinear, that is to say, the roof-cornice or parapet slopes downwards towards the ends in a slight curve. The facade on the east is pierced by three doorways, each alternating with shallow vertical panels. There is also an additional doorway in each of the two sides of the verandah. The chamber is surmounted by a dome resting on squinches and further supported by stone pilasters. The use of glazed-tile decoration in and around the panels constitutes the main scheme of ornament. In short, the Chamkatti Masjid represents a typical Bengal mosque of the one-domed squire chamber-cum-verandah variety.

Tantipara Mosque, Gaur

This mosque was built, according to an inscription, in 1480 by one Mirsad khan. It is thus almost contemporary with the Chamkatti Mosque and represents the multi-domed oblong hall variety of a typical Bengal mosque. It measures about 28 m by 13.5 m externally and has, as in the other variety, octagonal towers at four angles and a curvilinear roof. There are five arched openings in the front and two in each side. The area between these openings is taken up by upright panels, one above the other, containing ornamental arches, filled with and surrounded by delicate floral patterns. The interior is divided into two aisles by a single row of four stone pillars, which supported ten domes, now fallen. The Tantipara Mosque has been considered to be the finest monument of Gaur in perfection of detail, and the surface terracotta decoration of Bengal is at its zenith therein.

Chhota Sona Masjid, Gaur

Now just within the Bangla Desh border, it was built by Wali Muhammad sometime during the reign of Alaud-Din Husain Shah (1493-1529). It consists of a rectangular hall of brick faced with stone, which measures about 25 m by 16 m, with an octagonal tower embedded at each corner. Its curvilinear facade is richly carved in low relief with artistic foliate designs. The treatment of the arches of its five arched openings is interesting in that they have multiple cusps. A similar variation is provided in the treatment of its curvilinear roof; the central dome, instead of being hemispherical, as are the rest, is of the Bengali *chauchala* type. The interior of the mosque, measuring about 22 m by 12 m, is divided into three aisles and five bays. The middle bay is larger than the rest, thus turning the internal plan into that of a central nave with side wings.

Bara Sona Mosque, Gaur

So called on account of the gilding that once adorned its domes, it is locally known as 'baradwari (twelve-doored) though it contains only 11 arched openings. Measuring externally about 51 m by 23 m, it is the largest of all the monuments in Gaur and was constructed in 1526 by Nusrat Shah, the king of Bengal (1519-32). Built of brick faced with stone, this multi-domed oblong type of Bengal mosque stands on the western side of a quadrangle about 61 m square. It is entered by handsome arched gateways in the middle of its north, east and south sides. The mosque proper consists of a rectangular prayer-hall with a corridor in front. It has octagonal towers at the four angles and at two places marking the ends of the corridor where they meet the hall. The curvilinear facade contains eleven arched entrances on the east, and is quite plain except for some mouldings.

The interior is three bays deep, each longitudinal aisle opening through a door into the north and south sides, and was surmounted by 44 domes. Except for the 11 domes on the verandah roof, all others have collapsed. Its plain facade, devoid of any ornament either in sculpture or in terracotta, detracts considerably from its impressiveness, though the mosque looks quite picturesque from a distance.

SHARQI: JAUNPUR

Atala Masjid Jaunpur

Founded in 1377 but completed only in 1408 in the reign of Ibrahim Sharqi (1401-40), the Atala Masjid represents the earliest and finest example of the

Sharqi architectural style. It covers a square of 78.5 m each side and conforms to the general plan of an orthodox mosque. Its open court is enclosed on the west by the prayer-hall and on the remaining three sides by double-storeyed cloisters, five aisles deep. Two aisles of the lower storey are made to form a range of cells with a pillared verandah which is open on the outside. Of the three handsome gateways in the middle of the three sides, those on the north and the south are more prominent, being surmounted by domes. But the most distinguishing feature of the mosque is the original treatment of the facade of its prayer-hall, composed of three impressive pylons, i.e., large ornamental archways. The central pylon is gigantic in size, measuring 17 m in width at the base and 23 m in height, and consists of a lofty recessed arch, about 3.5 m deep and pierced by rows of arched openings. The arch is set within two square tapering towers, the sides of which are broken by four main string-courses and sunk arches.

The central compartment of the prayer-hall supports a shapely hemispherical dome resting on the squinch-cum-bracket pendentives; the two side compartments are likewise roofed by similar domes. At the rear, portions occupied by the three *mihrabs* project outwards and are flanked by tapering turrets.

The Atala Masjid, neither large nor quite perfect in detail, is remarkable for its originality of conception and freshness of style. No wonder that it served as a model for the subsequent mosques of Jaunpur.

Lal Darwaza Mosque, Jaunpur

The construction of this mosque, said to have taken place in about 1450, is attributed to Bibi Raji, the queen of Sultan Mahmud Shah (1436-58). The smallest mosque at Jaunpur, it consists of a courtyard about 40 sq. m and is designed after the much bigger Atala Mosque, from which it differs in some respects. For example, its prayer-hall, measuring about 51 m by 10.5 m, is topped by only one dome instead of three. Also, the facade has only one pylon, which may have been necessitated by the reduced size of the building. Moreover, the pylon — about 13.5 m in width and 15 m in height — is thus much lower as compared to its width, which deprives this mosque of the imposing effect of the Atala Mosque.

Jami Masjid, Jaunpur

The last great mosque of Jaunpur and also its largest, the Jami Masjid was built by the last Sharqi ruler, Husain Shah (1458-79). In plan and design, it is a larger version of the Atala Mosque whose essential features are repeated here, with some modifications. The entire structure, enclosing a courtyard of about

66 m by 64.5 m, is raised on a high basement provided with imposing flight of steps for approach. The entrance gateways on the three sides are halls of equal and pleasing proportions, surmounted by handsome domes. The interior of the prayer-hall is remarkable for its noble and imposing square chamber in the centre, roofed by a lofty dome. Also interesting is the treatment of the side wings, where a departure from the usual style is made in that they are covered by high vaulted roofs and not raised on pillars as in the Atala Mosque.

GUJARAT:AHMEDABAD, CHAMPANER, MANGROL

Jami Masjid, Mangrol

This imposing mosque of considerable dimensions, which is undoubtedly the finest in the peninsular Saurashtra in Gujarat State and which can be reckoned as one of the best of its class in India, was built, entirely of stone, in 1384, in the reign of Firuz Tughluq, by an official Izzud-Din. It conforms to the courtyard--*cum*-cloisters plan and is a solid and massive building. Around the three sides of its extensive open court, in the north-west corner of which is a fine stone step-well, runs a pillared corridor composed of tall columns arranged in two storeys. The prayer-hall on the west end is a monument of much interest: it is a pillared hall of the closed variety, roofed with ten domes of almost conical shape. The rows of numerous pillars and beams in its interior, built in the local beam-and-lintel style, produce a very picturesque effect.

Even more interesting is the treatment of its facade. The plain surface is broken by providing arched entrances and plain and balconied windows. Of its three archways of unusual design, the central one is larger, projecting slightly beyond the roof-level and flanked by two windows, supported on brackets and covered by deep cornices, projecting from the upper part of the wall. The side archways which are smaller but of the same shape, occur in the middle of the sides and have on one side, in the lower part of the wall, a similar balconied window of the same type, which also occurs, one at each extreme end, in line with the two windows flanking the central archway. Three plain windows are also provided in each of the two wings.

Jami Masjid, Ahmedabad

It was built in 1424 by Ahmad Shah 1(1411-41). Now practically surrounded on all sides by old and ugly houses and shops, this mosque, one of the largest in India, is reckoned by some as one of the most beautiful in the East and by others as one of the most imposing structures of its class in the world. It is built in the usual mosque plan, with an extensive courtyard, about 78 m by 6.8 m. It has a spacious prayer-hall partly of the closed and partly of

the pillared hall variety, measuring about 64 m by 29 m, on the west and enclosed by pillared corridors on the remaining three sides. The mosque has fifteen principal domes and about three hundred tall, slender and graceful pillars.

The facade is strikingly impressive on account of the shapely and graceful curves of its three large archways. The central archway, higher than the side ones, is flanked by two profusely carved buttresses with rich mouldings and string-courses, originally forming the base of two richly decorated lofty minarets of elegant proportions, which collapsed during the great earthquake of 1819. The monotony of the otherwise uniform height of the facade is broken by raising the central portion to three storeys, the side ones to two and the end ones to one storey.

This mosque also illustrates the perfect arrangement of stone-screen for admitting light into the hall, a typical feature of Gujarat mosques. The central compartment, immediately behind the great archway, is raised to three storeys, which are divided from one another by galleries supported on pillars; and the galleries are enclosed with panels of perforated stone-screens which, being at a higher level than the side wings, admit light into the prayer-hall below.

Jami Masjid, Champaner

Classed by Fergusson as architecturally the finest in Gujarat, this large mosque, entered through three imposing porches of sufficient architectural merit, occupies a total area of about 66 m by 55 m. Its prayer-hall on the west of the courtyard, taking up a space of about 52 m by 24 m, is of the closed variety. The open court in front is surrounded on the three sides by arched cloisters, one aisle deep.

The prayer-hall contains five pointed archways, and in addition to the two slender minarets which rise in five stages from the buttresses of the larger central opening to height of about 30 m, it has smaller minarets of pleasing shape at the four corners. Three balconied windows of the typical Gujarat variety relieve the plain look of the facade. Another noticeable feature of the mosque is the artistic treatment of the exterior of the walls of the prayer-chamber. The rear of western wall has a series of beautifully moulded buttresses, each alternating with two rectangular perforated stone-screen openings of attractive design. From the side-walls project, as in the case of the facade, galleried windows supported on brackets. Symmetrical composition, perfection of detail and decorative beauty have made the mosque an architectural achievement of a high order.

Rani Sabrai's Mosque, Ahmedabad

Regarded by competent critics as the most beautiful architectural monument of Ahmedabad, this mosque is of moderate size. It measures only about 14.5 m by 5.5 m and was built in 1514 by Rani Sabrai, widow of Sultan Mahmud I (1458-1511). It conforms to the open pillared hall variety of the Gujarat mosques in which the minarets are at the corners. In the closed hall variety, the minarets are placed on either side of the central opening of the facade. This delicate mosque is built entirely in the trabeate style. A deep cornice overhangs from the lower line of its parapet which is formed by merlons all around, while three shaply domes cover the roof. The two exquisitely designed tall and slender minarets rising in three stages from the corner buttresses are purely ornamental, since they do not have internal stairs, nor any galleries for the *muazzin* to stand upon. Balconied windows of the best Gujarat style project boldly from the sides, supported on extremely pleasing brackets. The mosque is a fine example of perfect balance between the decorative and architectural features: its slender and graceful minarets are in perfect harmony with the open prayer-hall. On account of the richness and fine detail of the delicate traceries and jewel-like carvings, it has been called a 'gem'. According to Sir John Marshall "East or West , it would be difficult to single out a building in which the parts are more harmoniously blended or in which balance, symmetry and decorative rhythm combine to produce a more perfect effect".

Sidi Said's Mosque, Ahmedabad

This small, incomplete, but magnificent mosque was constructed in 1572-73, in the very; last year of the independent Gujarat Sultanate, by Shaikh Said (wrongly, though commonly, spelt as Sayyid) Sultani, a prominent nobleman of the time of Muzaffar III (1561-73). The architectural character of this mosque, which has become world famous on account of its unique window traceries, has not been taken due notice of. In fact, it represents along with another obscure but architecturally important mosque, also at Ahmedabad, namely, the mosque of Sayyid Muhammad Ghaus, locally known as Ek-Minar-Masjid, the concluding phase of the Gujarat architectural style, which by a strange coincidence synchronised with the end of the Sultanate itself.

It consists of a single prayer-hall of the open variety, measuring about 21m by 11m. The hall is fronted by five well-proportioned archways, with a deep cornice above, supported on brackets. The hall is divided into fifteen bays by three longitudinal rows, not of pillars and beams, but of arcades, the arches of which, unlike in any other Gujarat building of this type, spring from the tall square stone piers. Each of these fifteen bays supports the vaulted lower part of the flat roof above, in the three different pendentive systems of bracket

diagonal-beam and squinch. But the world-wide fame of this mosque rests chiefly upon its superbly designed perforated stone window-screens filled with various floral, tree-plant and geometric traceries, totalling seven. In the words of Fergusson, "it is probably more like a work of nature than any other architectural detail that has been designed, even by the best architects of Greece or of the Middle Ages".

MALWA: MANDU

Mosque of Malik Mughis, Mandu

It was built in 1432 by Malik Mughis, prime minister of Hoshang Shah of Malwa (1406-35). Considered to be the finest and the most typical of the early extant mosques in the Malwa style, it is constructed in the usual mosque plan of colonnades enclosing a quadrangle, which here measures about 30.5 m each side. It is constructed on a raised terrace measuring about 45.5 m by 40 m, fronted on the east side by a range of arched chambers, from the middle of which projects an arched portico, approached by a flight of steps and serving as the main entrance. At each corner of this side is a domed turret. The prayer-hall has no arched facade, but is of the open pillared variety, while in the interior, which is four bays deep, pointed arches springing from the columns support the roof. This design of the columned hall with arches springing from pillar to pillar is quite impressive. Again, the columns are so placed as to form octagonal spaces, one in the centre and two at sides, with domical roofs, thus providing a pleasing variation in the general appearance of the hall. The roof of the prayer-hall is surmounted by three domes of the stilted type, placed on octagonal drums amidst a boldly designed parapet of merlons. The design of this mosque was followed in the plans of the subsequent mosques of the Malwa style.

Jami Masjid, Mandu

Begun by Hoshang Shah (1406-35) but completed only in about 1440 by his successor Mahmud Shah I (1436-69), the Jami Mosque, covering a square of 89 m each side, is the largest and most impressive building at Mandu. Its open court of about 50 sq. m is enclosed on each side by pillared halls fronted by eleven arched openings, two bays deep on the east, three on the north and south, and five on the west.

This mosque is also built on a lofty plinth containing arched chambers or cells as in the case of the Malik Mughis Mosque, but they are more refined and in a much better preserved state. Its main entrance, formed by an imposing porch surmounted by a dome, on the east, is approached by wide ascending steps and was originally decorated with

borders and panels of exquisitely coloured glazed tiles. The entire roof of the building is covered with 158 small domes, one over each bay of the interior, in addition to the three large domes of a symmetrical pattern placed on the roof of the sanctuary. The interior of the hall presents a dignified and stately appearance on account of the repeating arcades of arches springing from the pillars arranged in rows. In its simple grandeur, the Jami Mosque of Mandu is expressive of power and strength.

DECCAN : BIJAPUR, GULBARGA, HYDERABAD

Jami Mosque in the Fort, Gulbarga

Built in 1367, in the reign of Muhammad Shah Bahmani (1358-75), it is one of the most interesting mosques, architecturally and otherwise, in the whole of India. This large mosque, occupying a total area of about 66 m by 52 m, possesses in addition to several distinctive characteristics, the unique feature of having no open courtyard at all, while conforming at the same time to the usual orthodox mosque plan. Entered through a tall and narrow gateway on the north, it has wide cloisters on three sides with tall arcaded fronts facing outside and a spacious prayer-hall on the west, crowned by a lofty stilted dome placed on a clerestory of a high and substantial square base. At the four angles of the mosque are similar domes, but of smaller size.

But the originality of conception that makes this mosque architecturally important lies in the treatment of its spacious courtyard, measuring about 38.5 m by 33.5 m, which instead of being kept open is covered in the same line with the surrounding colonnades. This otherwise open court has been converted into an arcaded hall, through rows or columns forming 68 bays, each roofed over by a cupola. Another striking feature is the design of the arches in the single arcade constituting the cloisters. They are extremely wide, while the piers supporting them are too low, investing the interior with an uncommon, but nevertheless pleasing effect.

The mosque is also remarkable for the treatment of its extensive exterior. The enclosing walls are not closed as is generally the case in similar orthodox plan mosques, but are pierced, on each side, by a range of archways, varying in numbers from side to side. The surface is further relieved by the battlemented parapet having small turrets at corners. On the structural side, the mosque is wholly built in the arcuate style, and has no trace of any indigenous influence either in its construction or in its conception. It certainly deserves to be ranked as one of the finest mosques of India.

Jami Masjid, Bijapur

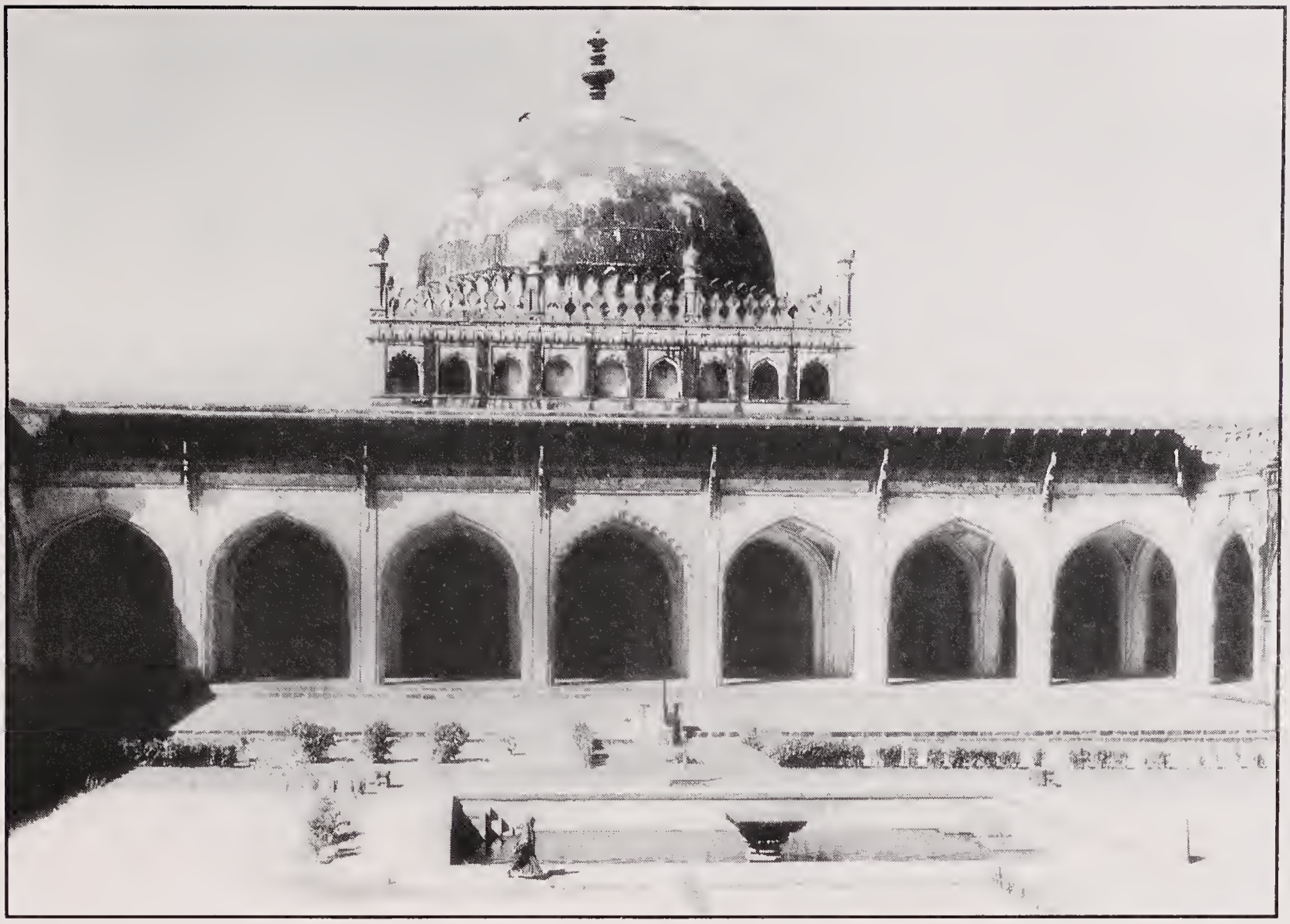
Its construction started in the beginning of the rule of Ali Adil Shah I (1558-80), while its central *mihrab* was built and decorated profusely in the time of Muhammad Adil Shah (1627-56). Simple in design and comparatively less ornate, the mosque, which was never completed, is unequalled among the Bijapur mosques as far as the fine proportions and blending of its various parts are concerned. It is also the largest of them covering an area of about 137 m by 68.5 m. Its enclosed square court, measuring about 47 m a side, has on each side a beautiful range of seven arches, leading into the arcaded corridors on three sides and into the prayer-hall on the west. A deep cornice supported on brackets projects from the upper part above these arches.

The five-bay-deep prayer-hall, measuring about 63 m by 32.5 m, is divided by substantial masonry piers supporting wide pointed arches into 45 bays in all, of which nine in the central part form a square on 12 piers to support the great dome on the principle of intersecting arches — a system of transition from the square shape of the hall into the circular shape of the dome-base, which was freely employed in Bijapur monuments, but in North India during the Mughal period only. The only dome of considerable volume and semi-circular outline, divested of stilts, is rested on the square clerestory above the roof, having nine arched windows in each side and a row of merlons running along the parapet, relieved by small turrets at corners and at regular intervals. The place of the dome where it meets this base is concealed within a band of conventional petals, a feature typical of the Deccan mosques.

Also worth notice is the imagination displayed by the architect in imparting to the vast exterior of the mosque a pleasing appearance, as in the case of the Gulbarga mosque, though in a, different way. The monotony of the bare outer walls is relieved by two rows of arcades. The lower arcade is ornamental and is composed of recessed or blind arches. The upper arcade forms an arched corridor all along the length and width of the building. Also remarkable is the embellishment of the central *mihrab,* profusely painted in a rich design with brilliant colours. This was, as stated above, done at a later date.

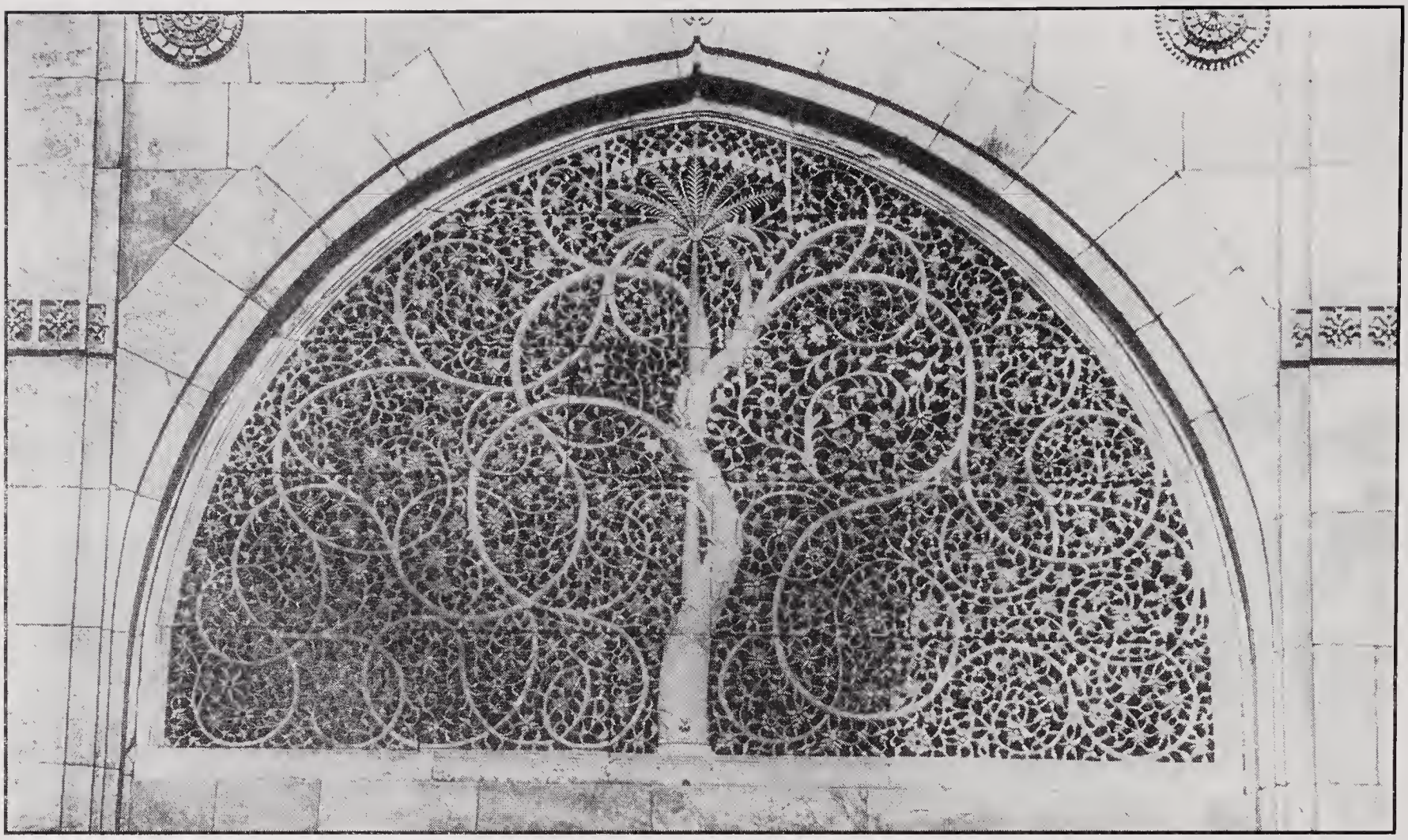
Zanjiri or Malika Jahan's Mosque, Bijapur

This mosque is reported to have been constructed in 1587 by Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580-1627) in honour of Princess Jahan Begam after whom it is

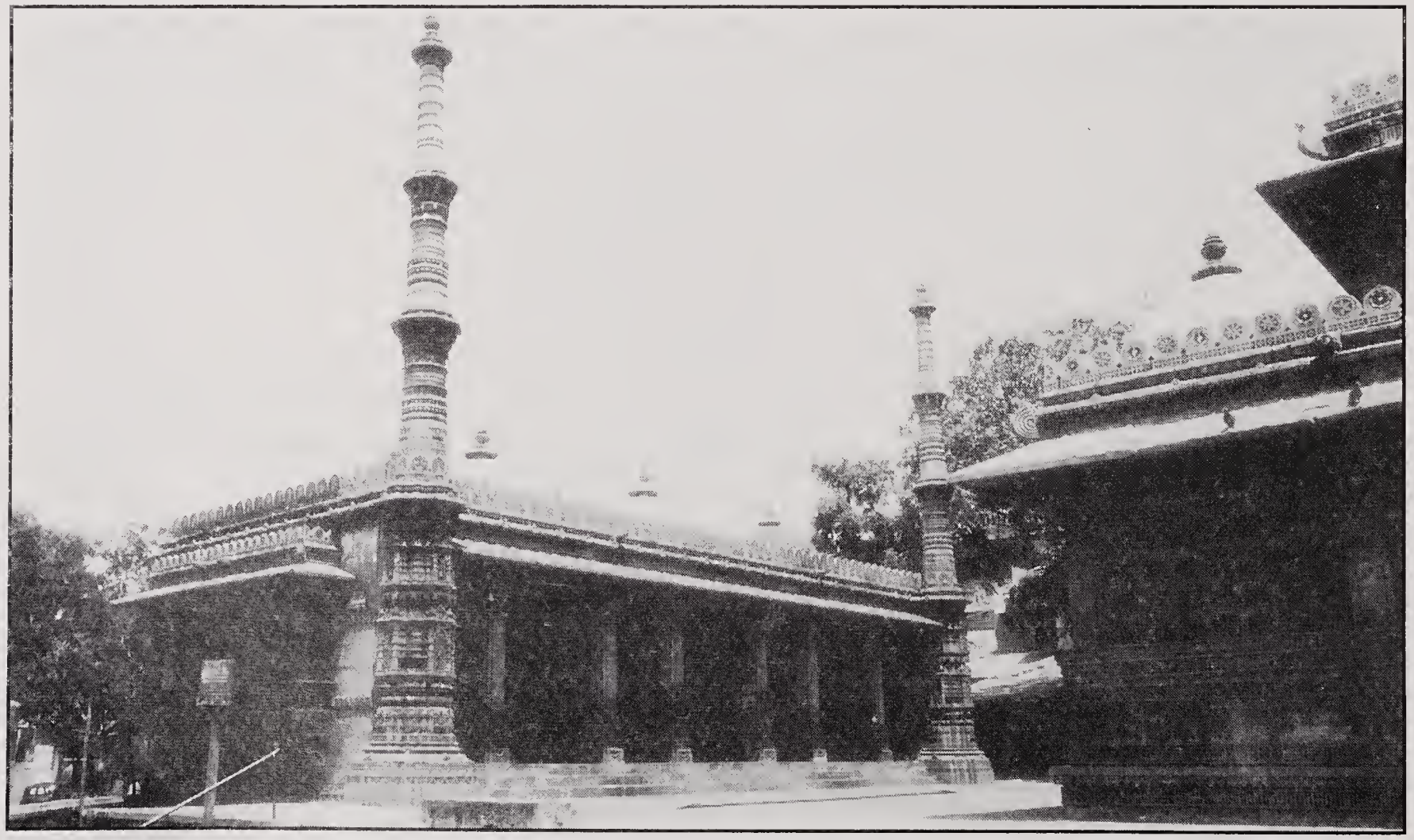


The Jami Masjid of Bijapur, the largest in the city, is remarkable for its fine proportions and symmetry as well as for its richly decorated mihrab.

The Jami Mosque of Mandu is a highly impressive structure. Largest among the mosques in Mandu, it was completed in 1440



One of the beautifully carved stone-screens of world fame in the Sidi Said Mosque at Ahmedabad. Constructed in 1572-73, this mosque was left incomplete.



A view of Rani Sabrai's Mosque, which is aptly described as the gem among the architectural monuments of Ahmedabad. This delicate mosque was built in 1514 by Rani Sabrai, the widow of Sultan Mahmud I.

named. It is popularly called the Zanjiri Mosque on account of its hanging chain-ornamentation. It is a small but neat and pretty building raised on a highplinth, with a well-proportioned cornice supported on brackets, and represents the Bijapur architecture in its delicate phase. It consists of a rectangular hall with a facade of three arches, the central one being cusped. The facade has tall and slender minarets of pleasing proportions, crowned by melon-shaped domes at the four corners. A richly carved parapet of perforated stone-screens runs along the facade, containing, exactly above the piers of the arches below, little square canopies with a traceried window on each side. The central bay of the prayer-hall is roofed by the large dome, springing from the usual band of conventional petals referred to above. The amazing amount of delicate work between the arches and the dome, as indicated by the richness of the parapet wall, minute tracery of small kiosks and foliage patterns of the cornice and the beautiful and elaborately carved brackets supporting it, has rightly earned for the mosque the distinction of being called a gem among Bijapur monuments.

Andu Masjid, Bijapur

The egg-shaped dome of this mosque gives it the name 'Andu'. This small mosque was built in 1608 by Itibar Khan, one of the ministers of Ibrahim Adil Shah II. It is as remarkable for its curious plan as it is for the perfect quality of its building method. It is a double-storeyed building, but not a double-storey mosque, which may sound rather strange. Only the upper storey constitutes the mosque proper, while the lower one forms a hall. The motive for such a plan is not known. Its prayer-hall, measuring about 6 m square, has a facade of three arches, with a terrace in front approached by two stairways in the wall at the corners. The arches and the interior are of finely carved cut-stone. At the four corners and above the *mihrab*-buttresses at the rear of the single dome are provided with small domical minarets. Along the crest, a perforated parapet wall forms a lace-like fringe. The central dome and the domes over the minerates are melon-shaped with large vertical ribs, which is a somewhat uncommon feature among the Bijapur buildings. Again, the mosque is about the best constructed building, as may be seen from its extremely well-dressed stones and fine masonry joints.

Makka Masjid, Hyderabad

The construction of this imposing mosque in the orthodox style is said to have been started in 1617 by Muhammad Qutb Shah (1612-26), continued during the reigns of his successors Abdullah (1626-72) and Abid-Hasan (1672-

87) and finally completed in 1693 by Aurangzeb. It is one of the most sublime and impressive mosques in the Deccan. This spacious building measures about 68.5 m by 55 m and has in front a courtyard, about 110 m on each side. It consists of three compartments with two lofty minarets in front. The stone pillars in the colonnades of its interior are quite pleasing.

Toli Masjid, Hyderabad

This mosque, generally typical of a Qutb Shahi mosque, was built in 1671 by Musa Khan, an official of Abdullah Qutb Shah. Its prayer-hall consists of two compartments, the outer having five, and the inner having three, archways. The place of the two arches in the inner compartment has been filled by niches in the pillar-and-lintel style. The tall and narrow shape of these arches of which again the outer central one is provided with a cusped outline, is due to the fact that the usual archways have been placed on the capitals of the substantive masonry piers below. Its lofty minarets which are topped by domes are divided into two arcaded storeys above the parapet level by galleries supported on brackets. These minarets are remarkable for their graceful and balanced shape and rich mouldings. The high parapet along the facade, another prominent feature of the mosque, is formed of row of perforated arch-screens, which are crowned by thin merlons, alternating at intervals with small domical turrets. But perhaps the most remarkable feature of this comparatively small mosque lies in its abundant cut-plaster decoration, which reflects, both in motif and spirit, strong local influence.

KASHMIR: SRINAGAR

Jami Masjid Srinagar

This mosque is the most impressive architectural specimen of Kashmir in wood. It is also typical of Kashmir's mosque architecture. The Jami Masjid was originally founded in 1393-94 by Sultan Sikandar and was subsequently enlarged by his son Zainul-Abidin (1420-70). It was thrice burnt down and thrice rebuilt —once in the fifteenth century and twice in the seventeenth.

In general plan, the mosque contains the usual features of the Muslim mosque. Its square court of about 73 m a side surrounded on all sides by wide colonnades . Externally, it measures about 87 m each side. In the upper portions of the lofty exterior wall of the whole building, small arched openings are provided, while in the middle of each side is set a spacious hall, the largest on the west constituting the main sanctuary. These four halls, square in plan, consist of cubical chambers covered with Pyramidal roofs crowned with lofty spires above. There are open pavilions between the roof of the hall and the

base of the spires, which were intended to serve as a place for the call to prayers. These are remarkable for their fine proportion and impressive grandeur. The lofty pillars that form its aisles and cloisters are each made out of a single log of deodar trunk. They vary from 7.5 m to 15 m in height and invest the whole interior with great dignity.

MUGHAL : AGRA, DELHI, FATEHPUR SIKRI

Jami Mosque, Fatehpur Sikri

This mosque, by far the most impressive building in the whole group of magnificent buildings of Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri, was built in about 1571. It is a structure of great dimensions, covering a total area of about 166 m by 144 m. Its unusually large quadrangle measures about 110 m by I34 m. It is enclosed on the west by a prayer-hall of sizable dimensions, about 88 m by 20 m, and by pillared coisters on the remaining three sides.

The mosque not only ranks among the largest of its class in the country, but also provides a most typical and finished example thereof in the architectural style of the period. Unlike Akbar's buildings which are mainly trabeate, it is mostly arcuate in its structure. It owes its distinct and fine character to the masterly treatment and expert manner in which the prayer-hall has been conceived and executed. The facade is formed of a row of alternating wide and narrow archways, and its extreme side wings are lower. In the middle is a large rectangular portal containing a spacious half-domed alcove in the Persian fashion, behind which rises a large dome, with smaller domes, one each above the wings. The prominent parapet of merlons, running all along the prayer-hall as well as the cloisters, is further emphasised by a range of pillared kiosks, which helps to break the sky-line admirably in a building of such proportions.

The interior of the sanctuary, divided into a central nave and side compartment is also remarkable for its architectural skill and decorative wealth. These compartments are short of open chambers connected with each other by pillared aisles. In system of supporting the roof, in which both beams and arches are skilfully employed, is illustrative of the balance maintained between these contrasting methods. All these features provide a variety of effect which is enhanced manifold by the extremely rich and varied mural decoration in gold and colours in many different patterns, distributed over the greater part of the interior, especially in the central and side compartments.

The mosque had originally three lofty gateways in its three sides. One of the south was replaced a little later by the majestic Buland Darwaza— a

great architectural monument in its own right. The main entrance to the mosque now is through the eastern gateway called Shahi Darwaza (Royal Gate). In the court of the mosque is situated another celebrated monument of great charm, namely, the beautiful white marble tomb of the celebrated saint, Shaikh Salim Chishti.

Moti Masjid, Agra

Built by Shah Jahan in seven years' time (1658-55), at a cost of three lakhs of rupees, this mosque of pure white marble is classed by Fergusson as one of the purest and most elegant buildings of its kind. It is raised on a lofty stylobate of red sandstone and has no architecturally pleasing effect on the onlooker from without. In plan, it consists of the usual open courtyard, about 48 m square, which is enclosed by low arched cloisters of single aisle, about 3 m deep, on three sides, and on the west by the main sanctuary, measuring about 48 m by 17 m internally. Its main entrance is on the east, which is reached by two flights of steps, but in the north and south walls also, there are doorways connected by similar stairs with archways opening into the marble-paved court.

The prayer-hall opens into the court through seven cusped arches of perfect shape and great beauty and is covered by three graceful domes of bullous shape placed on high drums. The interior consists of arcades of engrailed arches sprining from massive piers and interesting each other to form the groined vaults of the ceiling. Four octagonal kiosks at each corner of the hall and a range of seven delicate, kiosks, resting on four pillars placed along the front parapet wall, break the sky-line and add immensely to the impressiveness of the entire building.

Jami Masjid, Delhi

The magnificent mosque is ranked as the largest and most eminent of the buildings of its class in India. It was built at a cost of rupees ten lakhs, within a period of six years (1650-56), by Shah Jahan, after the transfer of the capital from Agra to Delhi. It is built in the orthodox mosque plan on a lofty basement, about 9 m high, with majestic flights of steps leading to imposing gateways on three sides of the courtyard which measures about 100 m square. At its four external corners are placed twelve-pillared kiosks surmounted by marble domes.

The facede of its spacious prayer-hall which measures about 61 m by 27.5 m, consists of eleven multi-foil arches with a greater emphasis on the central one rising far above the roof level. It is flanked by two minarets, each rising to a total height of about 40 m and divided into three stages by an equal number of projecting galleries, supported on brackets. Surmounted by twelve-sided

domical marble kiosks, their surface is treated with alternating vertical strips or red stone and white marble. Three extremely well-formed and elegant domes of white marble ornamented with stripes of black marble, and white marble cupolas at the corners as well as at the two sides of the *qibla* portion of the rear wall, have turned this imposing hall into a monument of great beauty and dignity. Balanced by the imposing gateways and two-storeyed cloisters referred to above, these have produced an architectural achievement of no mean order. Despite the over-all vast proportions of the mosque, its various component parts have been blended together in such perfect have been blended together in such perfect harmony and effortless homogeneity as to result in a magnificent whole of great beauty and elegance.

MYSORE: SERINGAPATAM

Masjid-i-Ala, Seringapatam

One of the most impressive Islamic monuments of South India, the Masjid-i-Ala is situated close to the ruins of the palace of Tipu Sultan of Mysore (1783-99) and just within the Bangalore Gate of his capital town of Seringapatam. Built by the said Sultan in 1786-87, this magnificent building of large dimensions is of sufficient architectural interest, both on account of its general plan and its two minars which tower far above the whole neighbourhood. The mosque itself raised on the middle of the rear half of a lofty terrace. The front half is taken up by a row of rooms, enclosing a small passage leading to the terrace above through a small ornamental entrance on the north. The terrace has an ornamental parapet of arches and perforated screens. The parapet is relieved at intervals by small turrets, thus providing variation. A similar parapet runs along the roof of the mosque proper.

The mosque consists of a large, single prayer-hall of closed variety, whose flat roof is supported on foiled arches. In the front is an open verandah built in the pillar-and-beam style. From the square base, which projects slightly from the front corners, two majestic minars (towars) rise far above the parapet in three octagonal stages. Each stage of the minar is separated from the other by a galleried balcony. Each of the minars is surcounted by a turnip-shaped masonry dome. The bare face of their shaft is broken up by a series of holes with a few arched openings. Their upper parts have narrow balconied terraces from which a visitor gets a panoramic view of the country around. These minars of unusual design and huge dimensions impart to this otherwise simple mosque a highly picturesque effect.

EPILOGUE

A large number of small as well as fairly large mosques were built across the vast country India during the past millenium through individual or community efforts and funds. Most of these have disappeared. After the establishment of the British rule, too,mosques continued to be reconstructed or constructed anew but larger ones were more or less on the prayer-hall plan of the Jami Mosque of Shahjahan at Delhi. An example of an ambitious enterprise undertaken by an individual with the help of community efforts, Maulana Imran Ali Nadvi of Bhopal is the Shahjahani Mosque at Bhopal, capital of the erstwhile Bhopal state and now of Madhya Pradesh. Named after Begum Shahjahan, ruler of Bhopal, this one of the largest and fairly impressive mosques of the country, however, is as good a complete copy of its prototype the Delhi Jami mosque of Shahjahan as the Bibi-ka-Maqbara tomb of Aurangabad now in Maharashtra, built by Aurangzeb, is of the Taj-Mahal at Agra constructed by his father Shahjahan, both in memory of their wives.

With the discovery of oil in the Middle-East, venues of employment opened up for Indian Muslims among others from all parts of the country, making up for their financial well-being . On the other hand, the oil-rich Arab countries, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Custodian of the Holiest mosque of Kaba in Mecca, disbursed and disburses large amounts of money for construction of mosques in Islamic countries including India which has a substantial Muslim population. Also, the Muslim emigrees to foreign countries like South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, etc. who have done financially well in their lands of adoption, spent and spend fairly large sums of money on educational institutions imparting instruction, primarily in religious sciences but more recently also in vocational and computer sciences. A fairly good number of such Darul-Ulums (Colleges or Mini-Universities) came to be established in states like Gujarat, more paticularly in its Bharuch district which these donors originally hailed from.

These Darul-Ulums are run from very impressive large campuses comprising spacious Lecture-Halls, Libraries and Reading Rooms, Hostels and Boarding Houses, Large Dining Halls, Press and Publication Centres for

imparting training in printing and publishing, Computer Centres, Fine Residential Quarters for different categories of Staff, Guest-Houses, etc. A typical example of such an educational institution is the Darul-Ulum at Kantharia in Bharuch district of Gujarat, which is the largest and most uptodate teaching and training centre in West India and also, one of the largest and perhaps most modern in the entire country.

These Darul-Ulums have, each, as their integral and indispensable part a large and spacious mosque where daily five time prayers can be offered in congregation by the inmates of these institutions. These ambitiously planned prayer-houses are very attractive. Remarkable for their large size and in some cases for their multi-storeyed exterior which produce a highly effective visual effect, these mosques furnish a fine example of a not an unpleasing blend and synthesis of traditional and modern mosque architecture. Some beautiful examples of such mosques may be seen at the Darul-Ulums of Amod, Hansot, Jambusar, Kantharia, etc., in Bharuch district (where U.K. Muslim emigrees hail from), Mangrol in Junagadh district, Lunawada in Panchmahals district, etc.

The importance of Mosque in Islamic society its architecture and location have been elaborately described in this book. The mosque, or the prayer house of Islam according to the text, is supposed to provide ultimate fulfilment and where one completely surrenders to God. In the early days of Islam the mosque was the centre of the political, religious and social life of its followers.

The author Dr. Z.A. Desai, an eminent scholar and a retired Director (Epigraphy), Archaeological Survey of India has authored many research books.

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

ISBN : 81-230-1001-X
Price : Rs. 48-00